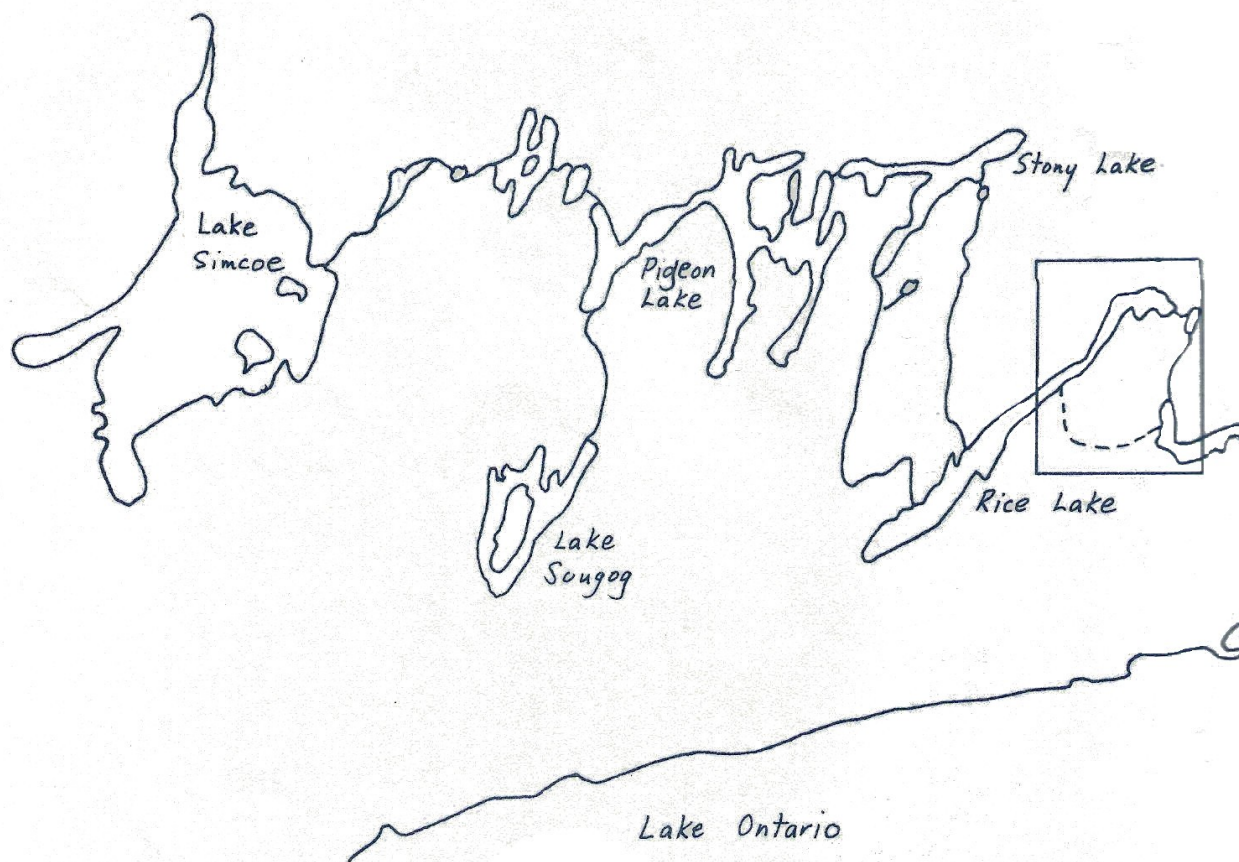


The Percy Portage





THE PERCY PORTAGE

Ferne Cristall

Gordon Holyer

Beverly Hood

Robin Hood

Michael Levenston

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Summer 1973

Trent University Press

Peterborough

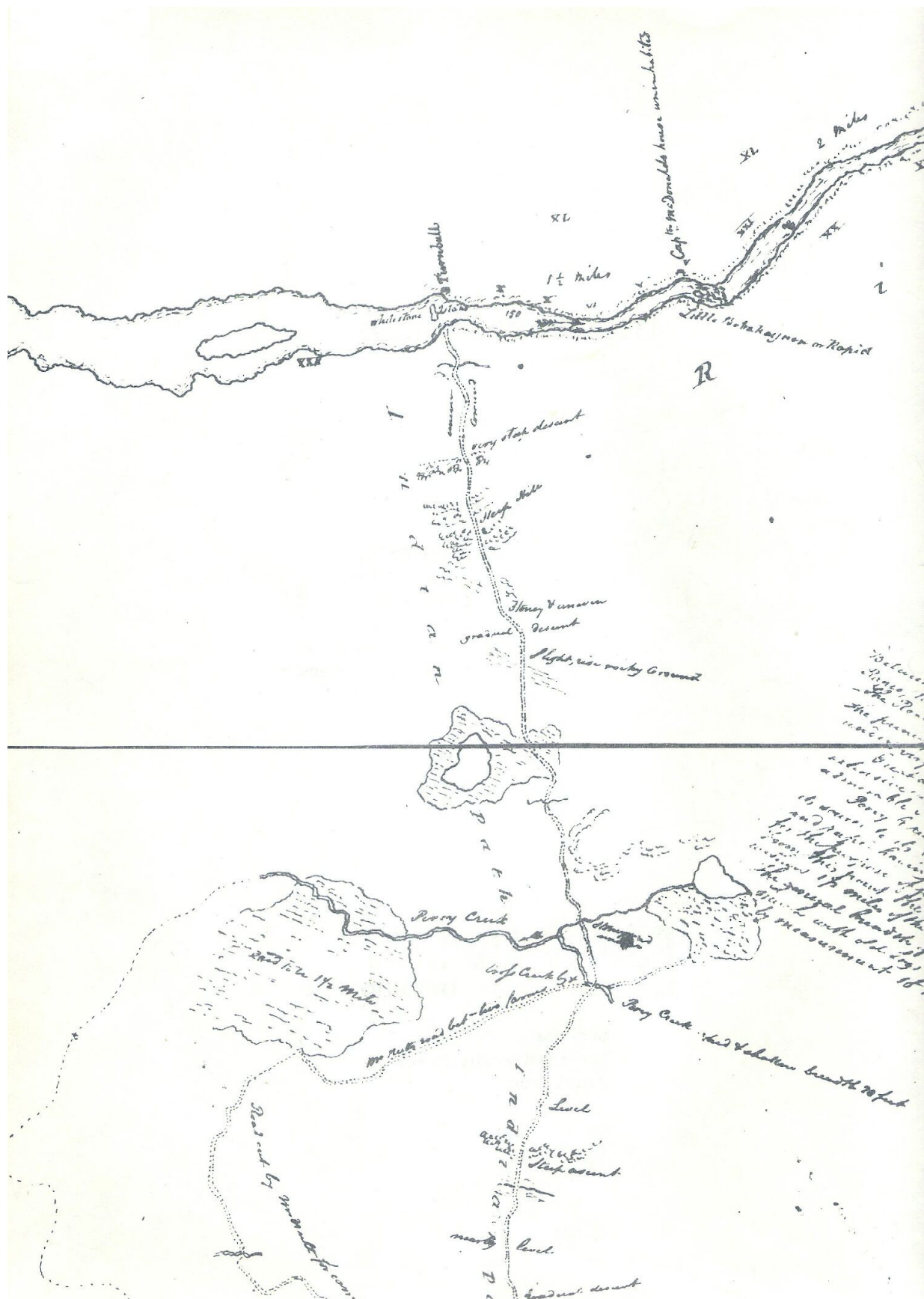


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-opposite page- A small section of the “Gold Mine Map” prepared by Edward Smith in 1816-1817. It shows the upper portion of the Percy Portage which leaves the Trent River at White Stone Island (McGuire’s) just to the west of Little Bobakaijuen (Hastings). This portion of the trail was followed overland by the Percy Portage People. Lamey and O’Melia Lakes were used as markers as were the few topographical descriptions that are found on this map. (“steep hill”, “stoney and uneven”, etc.)

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STORY OF THE PERCY PORTAGE

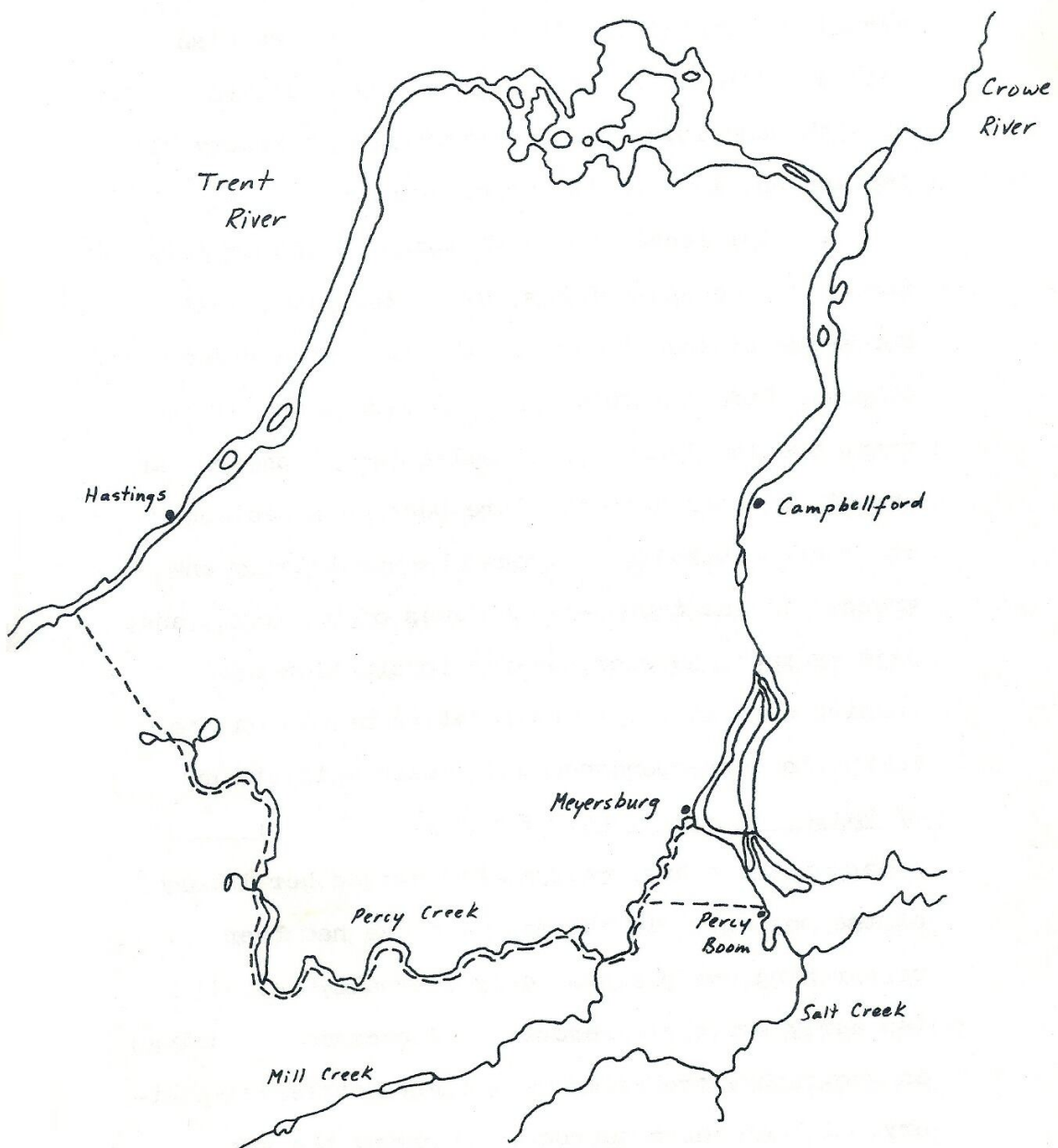
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For several years an older resident of Havelock, Mr. Jim Cumming, has been intrigued with portage routes on the Trent Waterway and especially with an unexplored, and seemingly lost portage in Percy Township. He transferred much of his enthusiasm to a member of our group, Robin Hood who, with Mr. Cumming's incentive, tried to delve further into this unknown path.

The only original clue was found on a map done by John Collins in 1790. A straight line marked the route, which crossed three streams, from the east end of Rice Lake to Percy Landing. Robin's curiosity led her to visit Mr. Featherstone, who is employed by the Trent Canal System. He agreed that this portage was most probably one of the foremost carrying places on the Trent Waterway. The group was formed and we began to seek support from various conservation authorities and historical societies in the vicinity such as Otonabee and Lower Trent Conservation Authorities, Peterboro Historical Society and Peterborough Naturalists. The first step was to locate the exact route, which we later planned to reconstruct.

Although this route was changed various times before we discovered "proof" of our portage, the original idea was incredibly accurate. On a snowy February day, Robin and Gordon went exploring down bumpy concession roads, attempting an initial try at analyzing the geography. It is slightly difficult to think "Indian" while sitting comfortably in an automobile vehicle, but the bush work was to come later. Also, the Indians are no longer the primary occupants of the area, so the question of six - amateur historians trampling through the property of private landowners aroused some thought. The Beldan Atlas assisted our search for landowners but only the ones who existed in 1878. To find more recent information - Robin and Ferne journeyed to the registry office in Colborne where we were charged two dollars to locate names of property owners. The assessment office helped us to find the addresses, but we did not contact the people immediately as the route was only tentative and our project's grant had not yet been accepted.

Before approaching the specific landowners, we needed support from the council of the area. Gordon and Ferne made a few trips to Hastings where the response was unexpectedly positive. The reeve, Carl Heath, a councilwoman, Pat Stewart, and Sam Kilpatrick, head of the Chamber of Commerce, converted our skepticism into enthusiasm.



Percy Portage ---

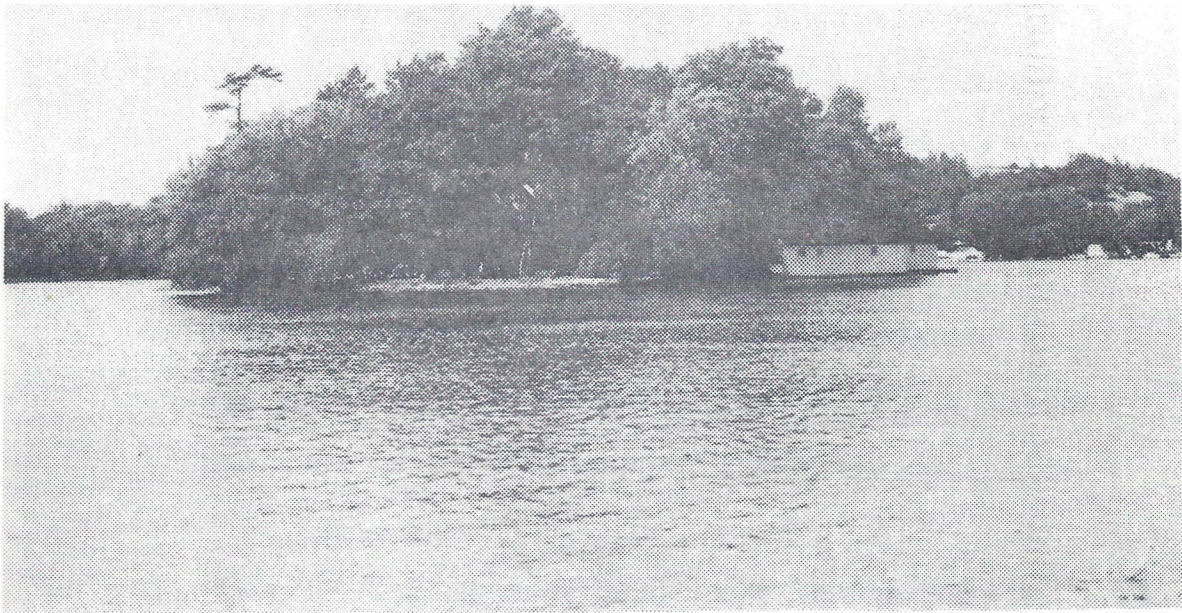
We also paid a visit to Mrs. Frank Brown who supplied us with some interesting history on the Alderville Indians who live in the area. All the local people we spoke to continually mentioned the name of Mrs. Helen Marryat, whose knowledge of the history of the area superseded any others. Unfortunately, she had died about eight years previously, but her collection of papers was thankfully stored in the Rare Documents section at Trent University. Michael became totally engrossed in the twenty-two volumes of her work, and, page by page, he searched for information concerning our portage, concentrating mainly on Mrs. Marryat's correspondence with Edwin Guillet, author of *Valley of the Trent*.

Finally, Michael found a map on which Mrs. Marryat had marked her theory of the portage. In the meantime, we had been researching Champlain's early journals, Baird's (an early surveyor) reports, and secondary readings in geography, archeology and early settlement history. All of these sources, including the gossip and fish tales Mrs. Marryat revealed, gave us a taste of the life and time with which we were dealing. The Indians of the area at the time of white settlement (early 1800's) supplied the earliest Europeans with a storehouse of knowledge for everyday living. The early roads were also, at one time, Indian paths and before that, deer paths. After two weeks of intensive research we were convinced of the importance of our trail as one of the main carrying routes on the Trent system and we decided to name it. We compromised by naming our project, The Percy Portage, which is obviously of "white" European origin and using an Indian symbol, meaning person, for the sign to be placed along the trail. A bone of contention still loomed above us. We had various theories on the portage routes, but all of the maps we had found to date were vague or drastically out of proportion and inaccurately drawn. Then, Michael uncovered our main clue, the "Goldmine Map" by Lieutenant Smith which showed a portage in Percy Township. It was done in great detail with particular landmarks noted on it. The secretaries for the Department of Lands and Forests were amazed at the ecstatic enthusiasm which erupted when Michael, after long hours of patient work, discovered this un-catalogued map. This map was undated but we later discovered that the whole Trent System was mapped in 1816 by a Captain W.F. Owen who appeared to have been commissioned to study the Trent as a feasible communication route. This find led Michael deeper and deeper into archival research while the rest of the group began to roam the countryside in search of the ancestors of names mentioned on the "Goldmine" map. Elderly residents remembered much and enjoyed relaying the details to a

new and interested ear. Other problems began to appear once the central research period was over. The major concern at this time was a means of transportation. Various local people had to be contacted and preliminary bush work done on the possible route. Hitch-hiking was not so simple on old, scarcely used concession roads. Without a vehicle we were at a standstill which was extremely frustrating since there was much to be done.

As well as the necessity of a car to assist us in visiting landowners and local historians, we needed to inform them of our existence and our purpose. We were not interested in a nature, hiking trail, but we desired to mark the portage for the historical purpose of saving it from obscurity. We were not aggressive when approaching these people and used the newspaper as our preliminary media. The Hastings Star, Campbellford Herald, Warkworth Journal, and Peterborough Examiner introduced us in a favourable way which proved helpful when meeting people along the route. A school principal in Warkworth reprinted our letter in the town newspaper, which we accidentally discovered two weeks later.

Now it was time to move into the immediate area. But first an agreement had to be made on which route was to be marked. Guillet's book, Valley of the Trent, showed Collin's 1790 map of the portage as a straight line and Chewitt's map of 1826 showed it as a roughly sketched curved line. Smith's map of 1816 showed it curving also, but with much greater detail. Another idea was that the Indians carried their canoes across land three miles and then travelled Percy Creek until it met the Trent River at present day Meyersburg. We concluded that both the overland route and the water route would be utilized at different times of the year for purposes of warfare and later fur trading. We made an arbitrary decision to mark the creek route for aesthetic and scenic reasons, as well as being well travelled. The third reason was purely practical by following the creek we hoped to avoid interrupting farmers' fields and houses. As well, the overland routes had become the first roads, many of which are now well travelled.



McGuire's Island, once called White Stone Island,
marks the beginning of the Percy Portage.

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We were extremely lucky in choosing Hastings as our home base. Since we had no vehicle, council woman Pat Stewart moved our equipment, and the group, to a campsite which Carl Heath allowed us to use free of charge. Later we were able to rent the old Hastings train station where we set up an office-living type arrangement. After being settled for only a few days, people began appearing who were interested and full of advice. Small Ontario towns have an abundance of open minded, friendly people. In Cliff Skinkle's barber shop one could also be stimulated by an entertaining as well as informative conversation. Many were able to suggest specific sites of Indian relics, as well as the "specialists" on various topics. All our leads veered towards a prominent farmer of Asphodel Township, Everett Elmhurst. Mr. Elmhurst was very impressed with Michael's research of early settler history and especially with his discovery of Birdsall, one of the first surveyors, the great grand-father of E. Elmhurst. As a result of Michael's continual research in the archives, he turned up many obscure maps and land deeds which were particularly relevant to our work.

By this point our mass publicity drive was beginning to payoff. We received a letter from Mr. Hoyt Thompson, an old friend of Mrs. Marryat, who had seen one of our articles in the Hasting Star and remembered an occasion where Mrs. Marryat had pointed out to him the location of an old Indian portage in the area. Our visit with him proved fruitful as Mr. Dick Williamson joined us and we discovered that on his old property there was a cold spring running into the Trent River which was very popular with the local people. We also learned from our readings that many portages begin at a cold spring and the one we were looking for likely began there. Mr. Williamson assured us that we would have no trouble passing through the land of the present landowners. This was an exciting moment as we began to see our academic book work becoming more practical. Very often research and old documents can place you in an ideal world, where you lose contact with concrete reality. The field work was clearly in sight with the fact that the land topography, roads and streams began to correspond to the empirical evidence, which Michael had discovered in the Ontario archives.

As well as Michael's archival work, we searched for information in the Hastings and Warkworth libraries. The librarians were exceptionally helpful and interested, providing the names of people they thought could be helpful. Our knowledge of the history of Percy Township and Indian

+portages was growing, so it became necessary to correlate our information. Extensive notes had been taken, but a summary, largely for our benefit, was needed. The Department of Natural Resources in Napanee had required from us a monthly report on our progress and so a lengthy letter was sent which impressed them very much and assisted us in pulling together many of the important details.

Alternate portage routes were continually being suggested to us. Mr. Elmhurst told us of a suspected ancient Indian ceremonial ground located at the east end of Rice Lake just above Scriver's Island on the highest piece of land in the vicinity. On the top of this hill there was a natural level clearing. A trench or trail seemingly ran along the side of the clearing and there was an apparent circle of rocks pounded into the ground. An interesting fact about these rocks was that they were weather worn, which meant they had to be carried up a steep ascent, leading to the idea that the area had some ceremonial significance. Elmhurst introduced us to another valuable resource person. Fred Richardson, an anthropologist who is fascinated by Indians of the area. These two men took Ferne down Rice Lake, pointing out various archeological sites along the way and explaining their significance, ending the trip at the ceremonial campground now referred to as Mike Fitzpatrick's hill. Later that day Everett Elmhurst showed us his artifact collection which was found in the area and convinced us more positively of the Indian occupation in Percy Township.

The time for bush work and the marking of the trail was nearing, but we needed the signs. With helpful hints from Tony Welbourne of the Otonabee Region Conservation Authority, we obtained galvanized metal sheets which were cut into 5" squares and painted florescent orange and blue.

But there were still a few things to be done. We visited some of the historic sites in the area, Century Village in Lang, the Peterborough Petroglyphs (which are rock carvings done by early Indian tribes: and Serpent Mounds, a famous Indian burial ground first recorded by David Boyle in 1896. We visited Mrs. Frank Coveney who, as a centennial project, started to collect various farm histories in the area. Her notes were helpful in tracing old houses and discovering how the farm land traded hands. The municipal office in Warkworth helped us find names of property

owners along the first stretch of road. But as the creek meanders, not following any straight roads, the clerk could be of little assistance to the creek landowners at that early date.

By this point transportation had become so crucial that in order to visit these people we finally had to resort to renting an arrogant orange Vega which took us from place to place for one week, after which time we returned it. One reason was that the price of renting it turned out to be a rather great capitalist rip-off. A fortunate coincidence arose in that we inherited a decrepit old white Station Wagon. Unfortunately, the Station Wagon ate one quart of oil daily but with good care and pampering, it was reliable down twisting, bumpy gravel roads. Now we were able to contact the owners in order to obtain their permission to traipse over their land and place a few five inch florescent signs on trees along the way. We wrote a general letter, introducing ourselves and explaining our purpose. We stressed that it was primarily a historical trail and no tourists would flock over their land, scare their cows or litter pop cans along their corn fields. The reactions varied as the people varied. Some people were totally indifferent, others were curious as to why. A few people were excited, though, and asked to be kept up to date on our progress. Their excitement rejuvenated our enthusiasm. Only the "odd" person was skeptical or leery, but they agreed in the end.

Although we had visited most of the farm houses along the route, we were not sure if we had approached all the landowners, as many people rent property. This led us back to the registry office in Colborne. Here we obtained a lengthy list of owners, many of whom lived in the Toronto area, with the majority of others living in the immediate vicinity. This meant that a trip to Toronto would have to be made to those cottagers who lived in Percy only in the summer, and also to contact the real estate offices, for they owned much of the creek land. We mentioned to the real estate agents that the idea of an Indian trail going through one's property would be a good conversation piece. In Colborne, Michael also attempted to look for information concerning old maps and land deeds, but as the registrar was not present at the time, he was unable to do so. This built up much frustration with the bureaucracy since he knew that behind those locked doors, there existed much pertinent information. This frustration died as he realized the endless amount there was to learn so he consented to the idea that he must set limits somewhere. He soon met Marjorie Scriver, a friend of historian Mrs. Marryat.

Since we were now positive of the landowners, Bev and Gordon went visiting the majority of people and came back full of tales and experiences which were informative as well as humorous. One man informed us that the creek, which in the summer is almost totally walkable, becomes so high that fences are wiped away in the spring. Another fellow told us of a neighbour who owned a “basketful of arrowheads” which he found on his property. Some farmers had come upon relics by accident while ploughing their fields which led one to believe that a great number of Indians camped and travelled in this area. Many people on the route liked to mention that Champlain was said to have travelled down through this area in 1615, but how accurate this is, is still in question. Champlain's journals are too vague to make any final decisions. We approached many hard working farmers whose only fears were of us trampling their fields or frightening their cattle. One farmer informed us that there would be no use placing a sign on a stake in the middle of his field for it would just be plowed down. Hugh Jenney, a newcomer to the area at Maiden's Mill, told us of a story Miss Maiden passed down to him. He said that thirty-five to forty years ago, a point on the creek was once an Indian village. Many “I remember when” stories were slightly far fetched and it wasn't too difficult to separate the salmon stories from those with some validity.

All of the individual landowners gave us permission. The only other group to approach was the Township Council in connection with placing our signs in Percy Township Park. The meeting was informal yet all those present attempted to make it as official as possible. We were granted permission with only one stipulation. The signs were to be placed at least six feet off the ground to be out of reach to the cattle - a purely practical reason. Since we now had verbal permission to cross the land, we began walking, discussing the different routes that could have been used. Would they keep to high, well-drained land or would they follow depressions and swamps, offering more protection from the weather? A number of questions were raised and with the help of various resource persons, the conclusion was drawn that routes had a tendency to follow the sides of ridges and level areas.

In our search for people with some background in Indian history, we were recommended to see Nigel Drayton at Gore's Landing. A few of us went and were moved by this white-haired artist,

related to the Rubidge family, whose understanding of the Indian ways and culture was deep-rooted. His artifact collection can be described as no less than phenomenal. We visited him again and that time he let us read part of his written material and photograph his Indian relics. One of his arrowheads was nine inches long and perfectly symmetrical which makes one realize what precise experts these early craftsmen were.

Another group of people who were of great assistance to us were the Ganaraska Trail group, who were clearing and extending a nature path. Their project, like ours, was funded by the Federal Government. In the fields of geography, tree identification, cartography, etc., our knowledge was extremely limited. We had a good collection of maps, including topographical, concession maps and detailed aerial photographs. By an in depth study of these, we prepared ourselves for the terrain we would encounter. The Ganaraska group walked the first portion of our trail with us, remarking on the land structure. They later showed us the procedure for making line maps and a detailed map of the route. It was a relaxed easy setting in the Hastings train station that evening and it was pleasant for both groups to be able to relate to others doing work of a similar nature.

By the middle of July we needed a more expert opinion on the archeological portion of our project Archeologists J. Melbye from University of Toronto and Matt Hill from Waterloo University paid us a visit. We asked Fred Richardson to join us and he had much to offer in that his knowledge of the area is great and he showed us the place where excavation took place not far from the trail.

While part of the group was making detailed observations, discovering who and what existed along the present day route more archival research was being done in Ottawa. We walked much of Percy Creek checking the feasibility of canoe travel. Although some portions of the creek didn't cover our ankles, there were other areas so deep that five foot Beverly was forced to swim, work boots and all. It must be noted that the water level is lower in August than any other time of year and the Trent Canal System could easily have altered the flow of water in the creek. One farmer, Bill Petty, remembers his father speaking of taking a boat down the creek which indeed suggests that it would have been deeper. These innocent bushwalkers were mercilessly exposed to stinging nettles despite their vain attempts to avoid these unpleasant members of the plant

kingdom. The stream was abundant with fish and we saw numerous carp and mud suckers swim by our feet as we waded through both the heavily silted and rocky areas of the creek. There were frogs of all shapes and sizes and also painted turtles. We spotted two owls and many ruffed grouse which startled us, their colours camouflaging them in the wooded areas. After a few days of bush and creek walking - legs covered in scratches and bites from unknown insects, Michael returned from Ottawa, full of life with some new finds, only to discover five exhausted crew members. But it did not take long to realize the importance of his finds - Reuben Sherwood's (an early guide) memoirs. They were written in 1815 while he was doing a detailed study of the Trent Waterway System. He confirmed our "creek" theory for he mentioned the possible navigability of the creek.

Luck seemed to follow as one day Morley Dunk, owner of Dartford Pond told us that he would be draining the pond which would give us the opportunity to see the creek in its natural state. The pond was man made by the building of the dam. Morley's reason for draining it was that a beaver had crawled in and eaten away part of the wood, causing a leak. With the drainage of the dam, the water flow became much stronger downstream and below Highway 25, there was white water. The banks had flooded and our smallest crew member, Bev, had to grab onto an overhanging tree to avoid being swept away by the strong, hidden undercurrent.



The cedar stumps cleared from the surrounding fields line the old path.

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Back at Dartford, great excitement arose when the pond was drained. Suckers, rock bass, sun fish and shiners were being scooped into nets by the dozens by children and adults alike. There were also numerous frogs, snakes, crayfish and snails. Clam shells made patterns along the sand where the water had receded. We saw one snapping turtle, and later Morley told us he saw an eel swim by. The draining was well worth seeing and if it ever occurs again, we would advise you to go. This was a lucky year as the only other dam along Percy Creek, at Maiden's Mill was also drained. It is interesting to note that the original creek ran through different parts of the pond at Dartford and Maiden's Mill.

Now, it was finally time to mark the trail and the six of us decided that it must be a group effort. A shovel, an axe, a few hammers, nails and our florescent orange signs were the only equipment necessary. We began at the cold spring where we all refreshed ourselves with the delicious spring water. With the help of Borge's strong arm, we chopped a few poles on which we put signs up in treeless areas. As we hiked, a few of us took photographs, some carefully studied the map and marked our exact location while others put up the signs. We met various fields of mild cattle along the trail, most of whom viewed us skeptically. They seemed to avoid us as much as we did them. the deer flies and mosquitoes weren't so leery of us and approached freely aside from the scorching sun, everything was relaxing and went smoothly. Feona and Lyn Brownlee joined us, resounded thelr facts on the area and enjoyed the attention they received as they rode on the backs of Gordon and Borge through the nodding thistles. Everyone was affable and a cold drink made the hot weather bearable.

We decided to mark the creek at strateglc places only. We thought it not exceedingly picturesque to see florescent orange markers on trees when paddling or walking the scenic creek route. The signs are appropriate along the land route, but when they are not a necessity, as along the creek, they could prove an eyesore. The marking of the trail aoomplished the first part of our goal. Next we had to compile our Information into a coherent report. At this point we received a long awaited copy of the galley reports for the late Leslie Frost's book on the Scugog area. In his book, he made reference to our portage providing some interesting historioal points for Michael to muse over.

There seemed to be a wealth of material, enough for years of research. We divided our report into various sections, with each person in charge of one portion yet everyone contributing constructive criticisms. In the field of archeology, we visited a Trent University professor, Richard Johnson, whose research specifically involved Rice Lake. He gave us access to all the sites in the area which had been excavated, allowing us to analyze the situation in relation to the Percy Portage. Plant and wildlife identification was another major section. For this, Bev went collecting all sorts of obscure wildflowers and weeds, and after much bookwork, came up with even more obscure names for these plants. History and early settlement in the portage area received intensive research with the majority of the information found in archival exploration. A detailed map of the portage noting the landforms was also made. Photography was done by a few group members with the appreciated assistance in the darkroom from John Przybytek.

Upon developing each of the aforementioned topics, information and techniques of printing methods in the various fields was begun. Upon development of photographs, negatives of the prints had to be obtained in order to be copied in the printing process. Maps involved strictly line work. A cover was designed and after accumulating all the material, the final editing took place. Printing began with the aid of Trent University. So, after months of effort by the members of the Percy Portage crew, with a little help from our friends and about \$7800 from the federal government, the story of the Percy Portage has now begun to be told.

PREHISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

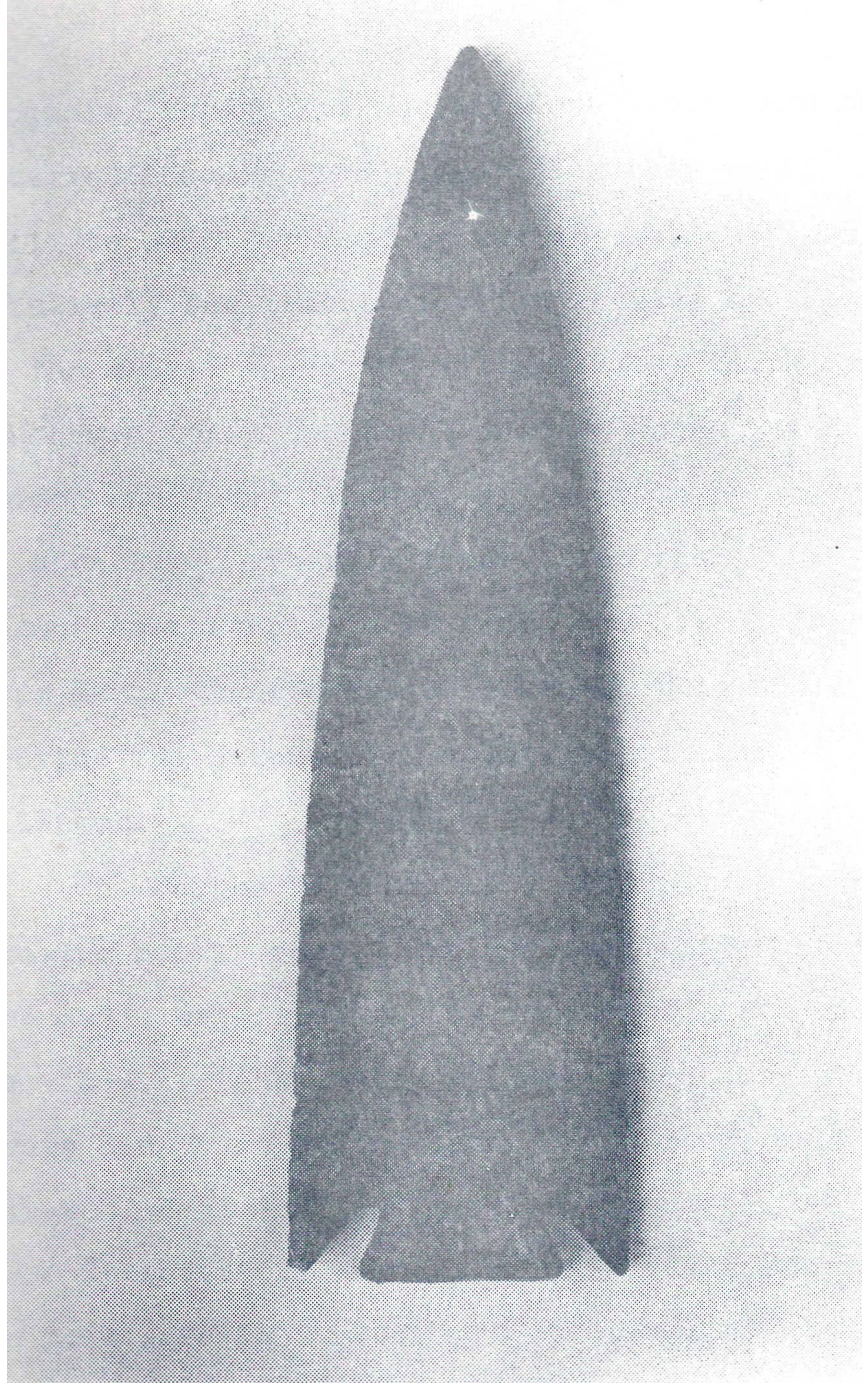
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Trails and portages are generally of less interest to students of native peoples than are the areas of past habitation and burial grounds. The reasons for this are apparent when one considers that areas of habitation - village and camp sites - and burials provide archaeologists with tangible materials that can be analyzed and displayed, instead of merely presenting a strip of land over which people have previously trod.

However, the work of archaeologists must not be dismissed, as Peterborough-Northumberland have witnessed much useful scientific excavation and examination. An examination of the area readily reveals the Trent watersystem dominating the region, with Rice Lake as the major component of the Trent system in this immediate area. Rice Lake has been the scene of several archaeological surveys, including David Boyle⁽¹⁾ and Richard B. Johnson⁽²⁾. Rice Lake offered food in the form of rice and fish, as well as being situated in an area of fertile soil and plentiful game. The large number of islands and prominent points provided both shelter and observation facilities for people using Rice Lake.

As Professor Johnston points out in his Archaeology of Rice Lake, material found near Rice Lake indicates occupation of this region as early as 7000 B.C.⁽³⁾ The large number of sites recorded in this area, as shown on the map, represent different cultural groups and time periods, ranging from the archaic period, such as the McIntyre site on the north shore of Rice Lake below the Otonabee River, to the time of native contact with Europeans. Some sites, such as West Sugar Island, just west of the Otonabee, indicate a number of different occupations ranging from archaic to post-contact. As both Boyle and Johnston emphasize, the most prominent archaeological feature of Rice Lake is the presence of a number of mounds. These mounds were the work of the peoples of the Point Peninsula culture, ranging from about 100 B.C to 300 A.D. Among the mounds in this region are the Miller Mounds, Preston Mounds, the Serpent Mounds at Roach Point, Cameron's Point, and the Levesconte Mound at Percy Reach.

More recently Rice Lake appears to have been part of a buffer zone between the Five Nation Iroquois, in what is now New York State, and the Ontario Iroquois or Hurons. Rice Lake would still be used for food collecting purposes, but relatively few traces of village sites are found in the area. Among the village sites in the area is the Benton site, south-east of Norham, and the



Archaic blade owned by Nigel Drayton. The blade was found with a burial on the south shore of Rice Lake.

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Strong and Mount Pleasant sites, both north-west of Rice Lake. These village sites share the common characteristic of being a short distance from major transportation routes. This would provide the Hurons with relatively sheltered villages.

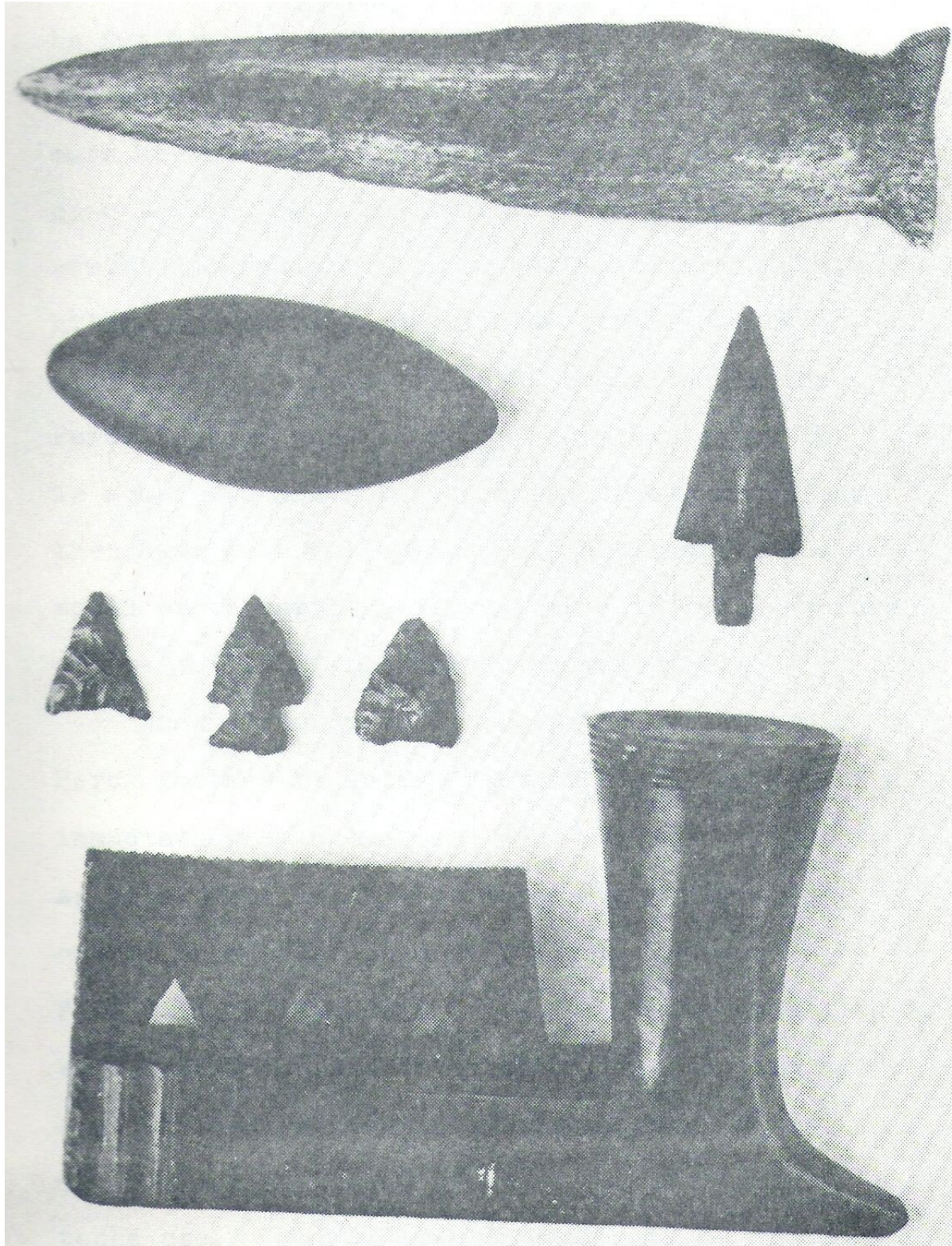
The Hurons were primarily agricultural people, growing mainly corn. The Hurons migrated up the the major watersystems, as they moved from village to village. The entire village would move about every ten years as the land would become exhausted, firewood depleted, and garbage excessive. A good introductory summary of the Indian movements in this area is provided by the Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority⁽⁴⁾. Eventually the Hurons were found in the Simcoe County-Georgian Bay region by Champlain and company in the early 1600's. However, Champlain does make note of passing by deserted villages in traveling from Huronia to Lake Ontario along the Trent waterway.

The utilization of Rice Lake by both the Hurons and the Five Nations made routes to this region of key strategic importance. Between Hastings and Percy Boom the large loop made by the Trent River, as well as the drastic change in elevation between these two points, encouraged the creation of several portage routes.

The Iroquois were not particularly adept at constructing canoes, as rough dugout elm canoes were the results of Iroquois efforts. The Hurons did, however, trade to obtain Ojibway birch bark canoes, which would be a valuable possession. These birch bark canoes would be used in hunting and war expeditions and could be readily portaged due to the lightness of their construction.

The route we chose to mark is but one of the several portages from Hastings to Percy Boom. As Collins illustrated in 1790 there was a straight line overland route that may have been used as an alternative to the Percy Portage.

Another alternative route may begin at Fitzpatrick's Hill, above Scriver Island. This is further upstream from the cold creek where the marked trail begins. A steep incline occurs at the beginning of the portage, followed by a level clearing. In this clearing an unverified ceremonial



Part of Nigel Drayton's collection of artifacts

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circle was discovered. This hill also provides one with an excellent observation post from which the beginning of the Percy Portage can be seen. From this point it is about two miles to the Percy Creek, which may then have been followed. This alternative route would prove particularly valuable to people unsure of the safety of following the main trail. What evidence is there of the use of the Percy Portage by Indians, particularly of the immediate pre-contact and post-contact period? As previously noted, the Hurons were migrating out of this area, as a buffer zone between the Five Nations and Huron tribes was being established. With both Huron and Five Nation tribes using Rice Lake, it is probable that this portage, as a major carrying place, received relatively intense use. After the defeat of the Hurons, the Iroquois began to move into this area. However, peace in their time was not readily attainable as Copway points out in his interesting, although inaccurate, history of the Ojibway nations. As the Mississaugan Ojibway moved into the area

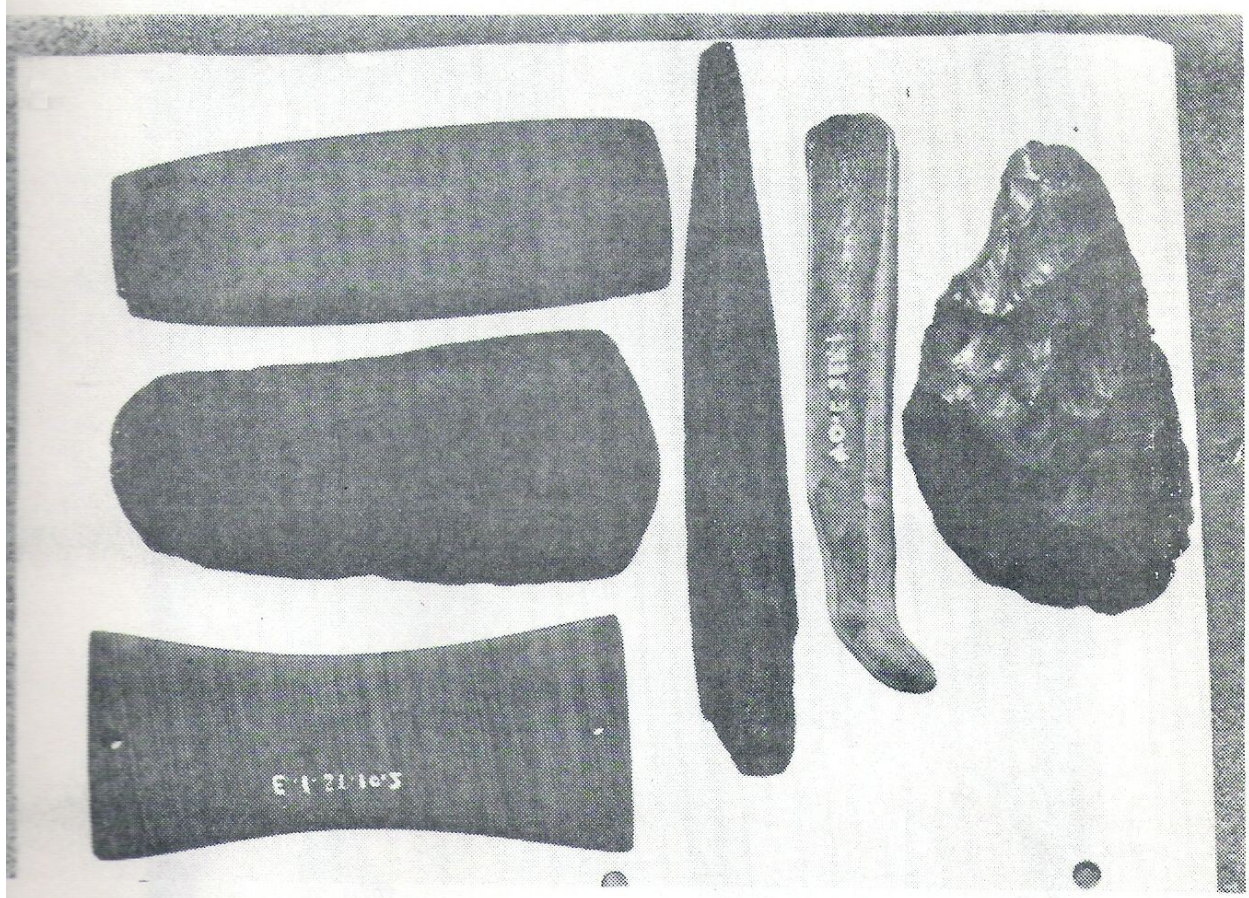
the fourth village which they attacked was at the mouth of
the Otonabee on Rice Lake, where several hundred were slain ...
(as later) ... panic-struck the Iroquois collected their
remaining forces in Percy ...⁽⁶⁾

Copway also "records" that

the fifth and last battle was fought
on an island near the mouth of
the river Trent.⁽⁷⁾

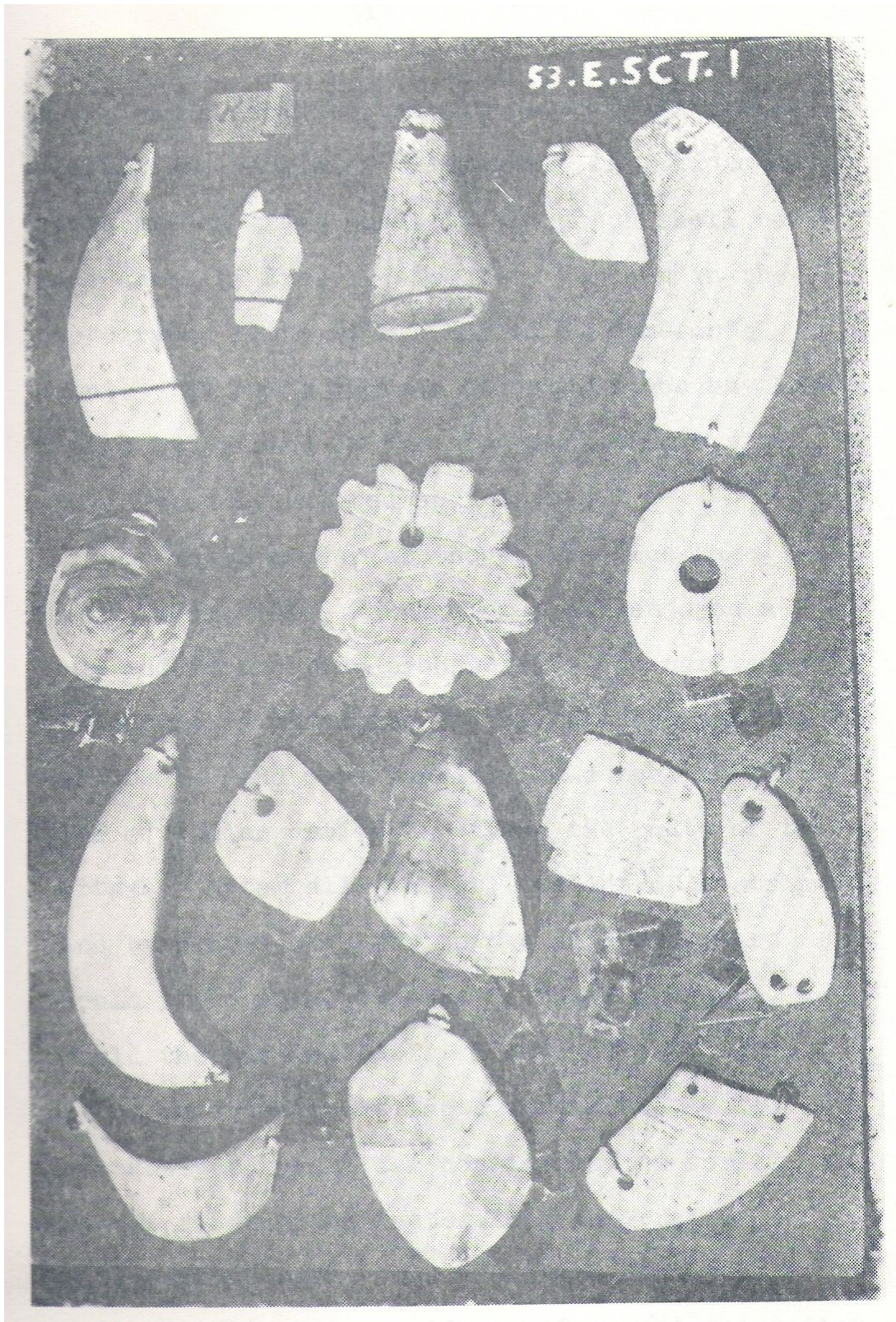
It is very probable that the fleeing Iroquois used the Percy Portage in a vain attempt to escape the Ojibway.

It is highly likely that the Middle Woodland people using this area developed and used the Percy Portage. The mounds in this area indicate very strong Hopewellian influences, a culture prominent in the Ohio-Illinois region, on the Point Peninsula people. This influence is particularly strong in the mounds at Cameron's Point and the Levesconte Site, both about a mile from their respective end of the Percy Portage. The finding of silver, copper, and conch shell



Part of the "Elmhurst Collection from Rice Lake

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Necklace owned by Everett Elmhurst found
At Cameron's Point

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grave goods verifies the extensive trade routes available to people of this area. An example of these traded grave goods is the conch shell necklace owned by Everett Elmhurst, as seen in the photograph, found with a burial at Cameron's Point. The Percy Portage carrying place may have been a major link in the transportation system that obviously existed at this time.

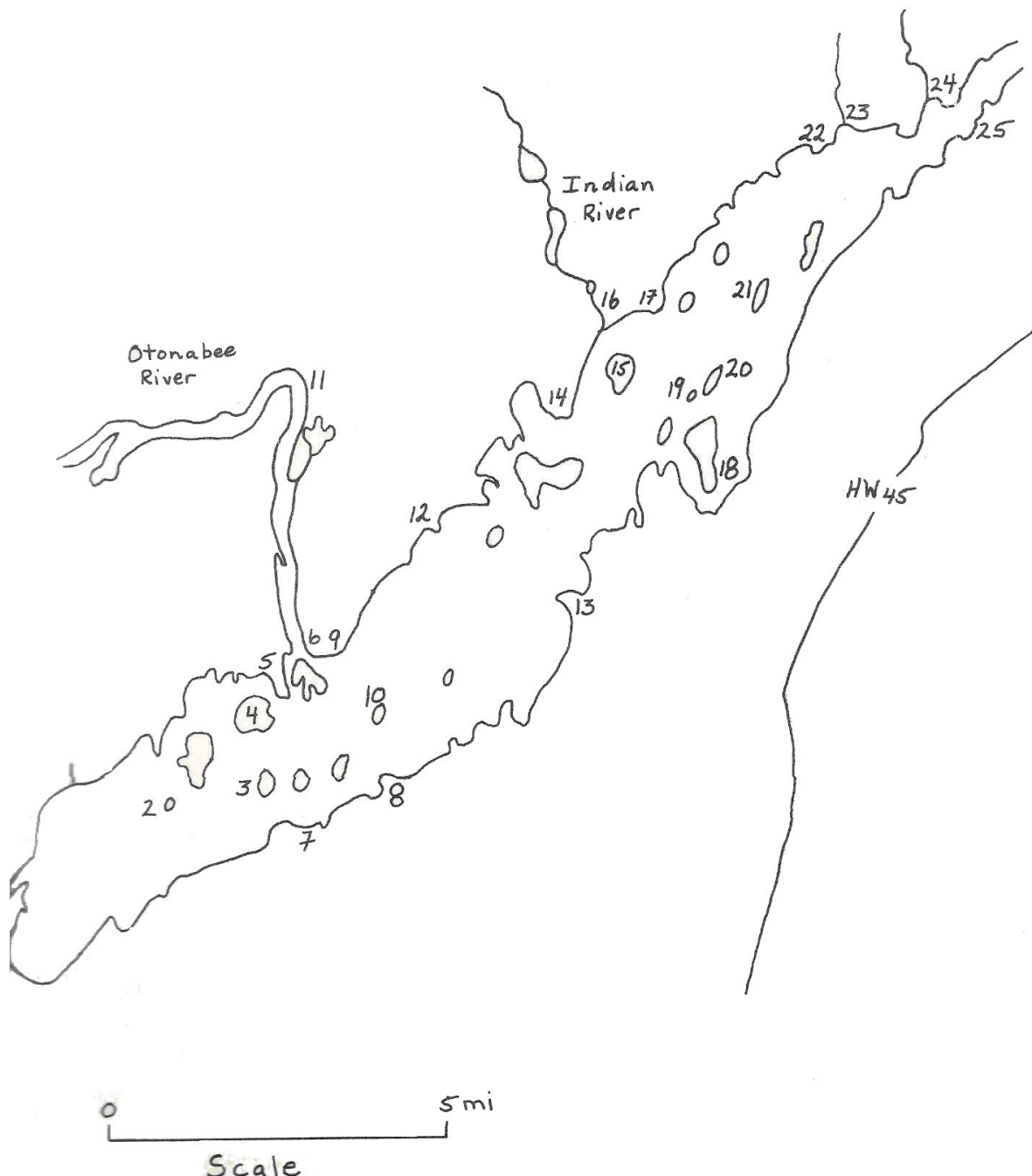
It would appear as though the Rice Lake, Trent River, Percy Portage area has enjoyed a long and interesting prehistory. One particularly disappointing dimension of this project was the failure to find more tangible evidence, in the form of Indian artifacts, along the route of the portage. After all, the utilization of a strip of land by people over one to two thousand years should yield some evidence of their presence, as should the bed and banks of Percy Creek. And yet no acceptable artifacts were found. However, practical considerations worked against finding artifacts along the trail. A brief surface survey was performed along the trail, despite cows, evidence of recent occupation by cows, crops, long grass, and roadways.

All these factors worked against finding materials along the route. The creek was extremely silty and it is highly probable that any artifacts would be thoroughly buried beneath successive layers of creek bottom. All in all, conditions were far from ideal for carrying out an extensive archaeological survey, and, as this was not the major aim of this project, it was decided to admit a lack of prehistoric finds rather than spend precious time performing a more thorough search.

However, evidence previously collected indicates that this area has experienced a long period of occupation. A case has been made for the importance of the Percy Portage from the Point Peninsula period onwards, as the ability to move quickly and easily through the Trent water system appears to be of major importance. For this reason the Percy Portage was a key link used by the Point Peninsula, Iroquois, and Ojibway groups that used this area.

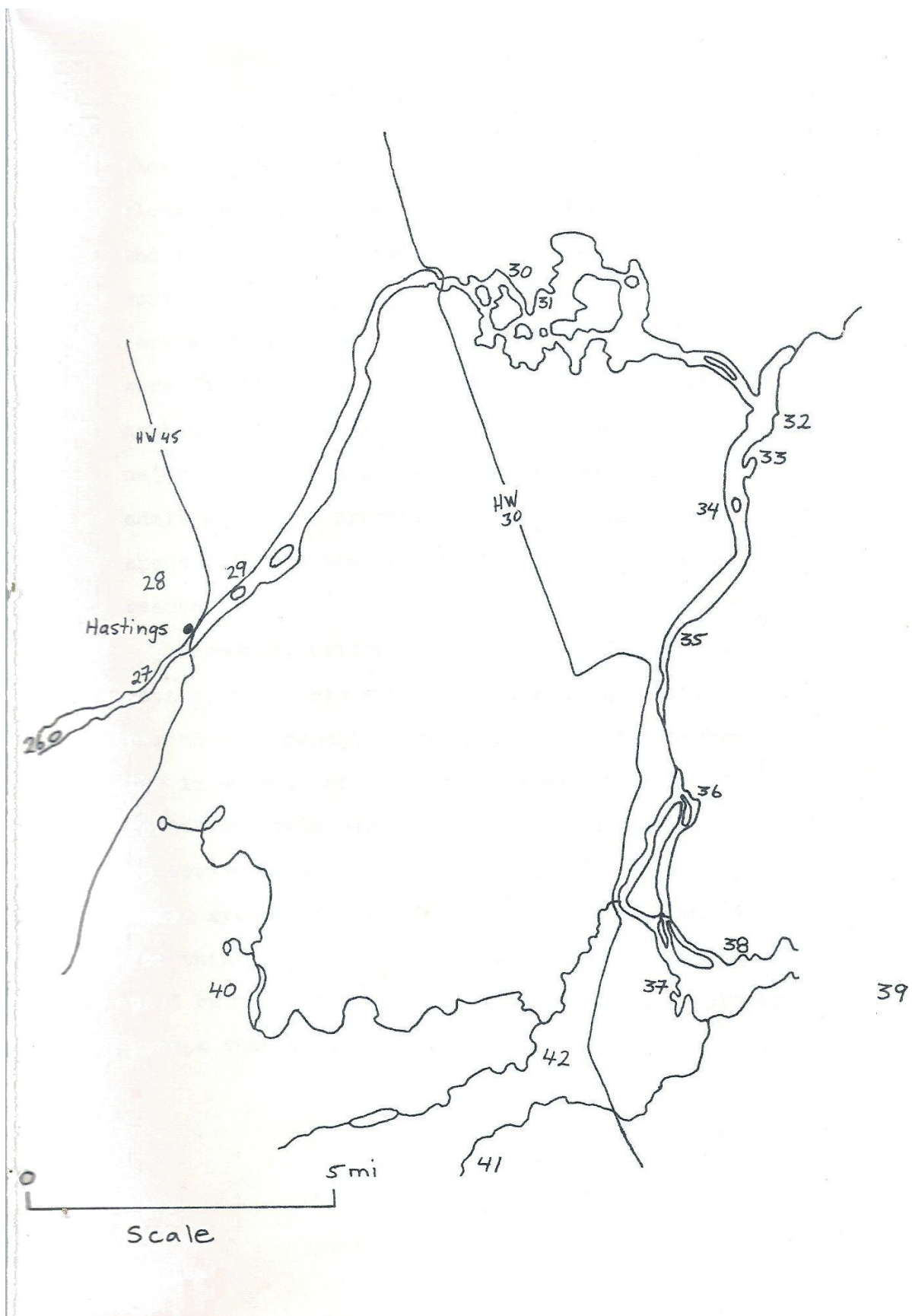
Key to Site Map

1. Macmahon Site
2. West Grape Island Site
3. West Sugar Island Site
4. Cow Island Site
5. Jubilee Point
6. Miller ~ounds
7. Gore's Landing
8. Close Point
9. Hatrick Point
10. Spook Island
11. Godfrey Point
12. McIntyre Site
13. Idylwilde Point
14. Serpent Mounds
15. East Sugar Island
16. Loucks Site
17. Foley Point
18. White Island
19. East Grape Island
20. Hickory Island
21. Grasshopper Island
22. Spillsbury Island
23. Birdsall Beach and Point
24. Cameron's Point
25. Unnamed Site



Key to Site Map

- 26. Scriver Island
- 27. Moore Site
- 28. Shaw Site
- 29. Preston Mounds
- 30. Conner Subdivision Site
- 31. Dunn Point
- 32. Scott Site
- 33. Dorrie Point
- 34. Trent Island # 1
- 35. Trent Island # 2
- 36. Meyers Island
- 37. Percy Boom
- 38. Levesconte Mound
- 39. Vardy Ridge
- 40. Richardson Site
- 41. Brenton Site
- 42. Buchanon Site



End Notes

1. David Boyle, "Archaeological Report" Annual Archaeological Report 1896-1897
Appendix to the Report of the Minister of Education, Ontario
2. Richard B. Johnston, Archaeology of Rice Lake Ontario Anthropology Papers, National
Museum of Canada, Number 19
3. Ibid, p. 6
4. Lower Trent Region Conservation Report, History Volume III (Toronto: 1970)
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(Toronto: Coles, 1972)
6. Ibid, p.90
7. Ibid, p. 91

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HISTORY OF THE PERCY PORTAGE

By

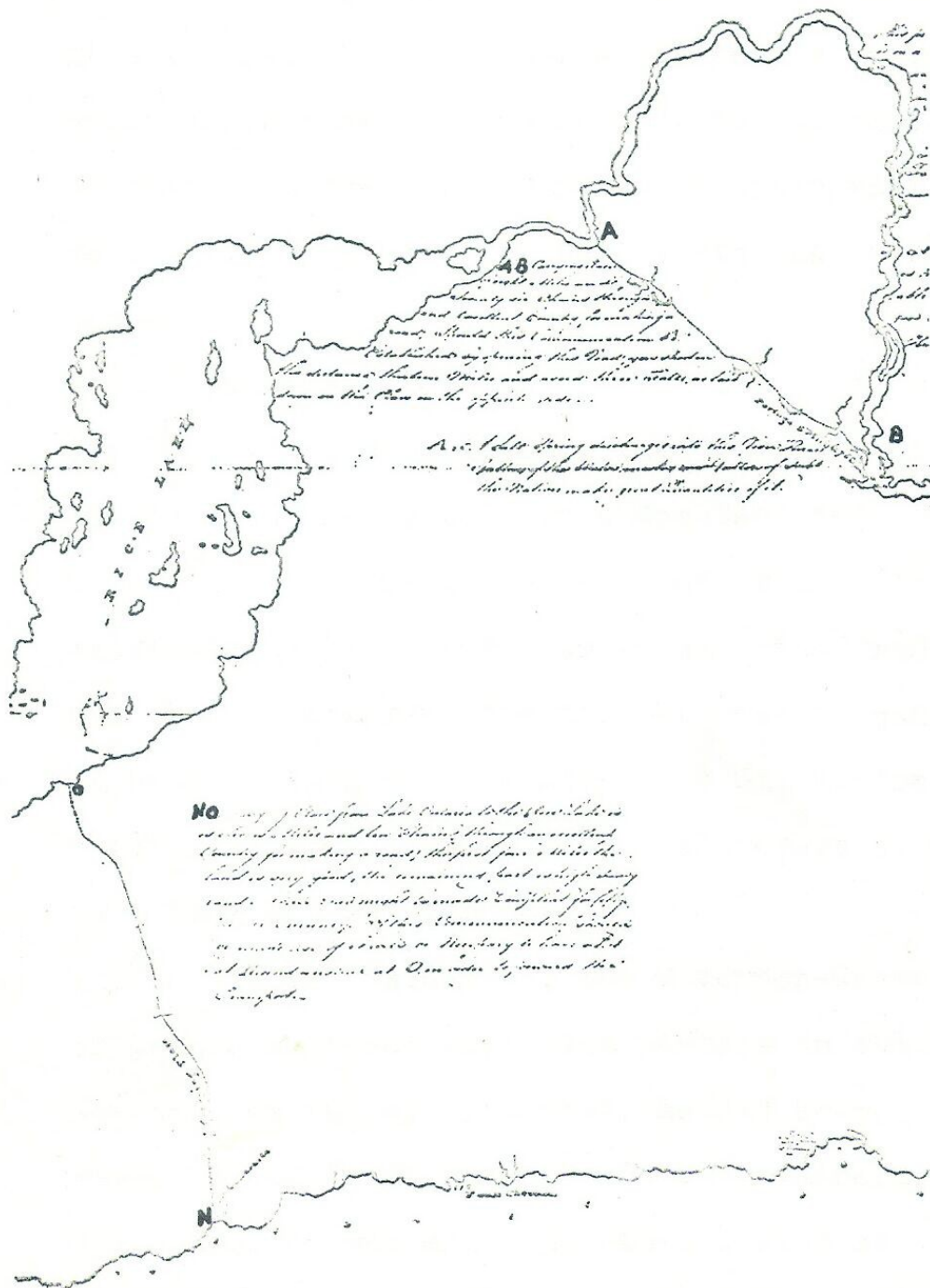
Michael Levenston

In searching for a lost portage it is the early maps which are our primary source. The Indians have left us no descriptive account of their Trent Valley. They knew its water paths and land highways for thousands of years before European intrusion and needed no permanent record. But the native people guided the earliest white explorers and mapmakers through the territory and left some of their wisdom with them. What few clues remain identifying the ancient carrying place through Percy Township must be taken from information set down by these first draughtsmen on the Trent (the river was named Sagetewedgewam by the Indians). The oldest known marking of the Percy Portage can be found on the 1790 Holland-Collins map⁽¹⁾ of the District of Nassau (central Ontario) which was prepared from different surveys made in the previous five years⁽²⁾ Written upon one of the three surviving copies of this map is the first description of the path,

AB Carrying Place of eight miles
and Seventy six Chains through
an Excellent Country for making
a road, Should this Communication
be Established by opening this
Road, you shorten the distance
thirteen Miles and avoid three Falls,
as laid down on the Plan on the opposite side-

Very little is to be gained from this lone description. So it is necessary that we give a brief account of the events that led up to Collin's journey over the Percy Portage in order that the description may have its full historical significance.

Between the year of their victory (1763) and the Treaty of Paris (1783), the British made little effort to settle or understand the lands in Upper Canada. During those twenty years the unsettled condition of the Americans, the French, and the Indians kept the new government occupied. It was the influx of Loyalist and Six Nation allies which finally necessitated the discovery of new, good land for settlement.



Collins map of 1793

The Collins-Holland Map of 1790 is the first map which marks the Percy Portage. (AB) The lower portage is named "Ganaraska". (NO)

Frederick Haldimand, the Governor-General of Quebec sent out exploring parties up the St. Lawrence as far as Cataraqui, the old French fort which is now Kingston. His Surveyor-General, Major Holland who made the observations at Cataraqui in June 1783, directed Captain La Force, Mr. Cotte, and Mr. Peachy to survey the north shore of Lake Ontario all the way to Niagara. By October of 1783 Captain Crawford had purchased from the Mississaugues that portion of the north shore of the St. Lawrence River and Bay of Quinte, from the Gananoque River to the Trent River, enough to allow John Collins to layout the first township in Ontario, Kingston.

Collins continued plotting townships in that month. Ernesttown, Fredericksburgh, and Adolphustown were completed, leading him to the east side of the Bay of Quinte. General settlement work continued in this area for the next few years. Sometime in either February or March of 1785 the new Lieutenant-Governor of Quebec, Henry Hamilton, learned of the Trent waterways system. In a letter to the Colonial Office in London Hamilton tells his superior, Lord Sidney, of his knowledge of a new communication route to Lake Huron and his impressions of its usefulness.

Quebec March 10, 1785

My Lord

A project having been layd before me for establishing a carrying place on the communication between Cataraquoui and Lake Huron, I have taken the steps I judged necessary for gaining a competent knowledge of the various circumstances to be attended to in such an undertaking in order to lay them respectfully before Your Lordship.

The advantage to the commerce of this Country as the matter has been stated to me) are many as abridging the time, provisions and number of men, hitherto necessarily employed in the Transport,

by the way of the Grand River called by the French la Riviere des Outaouais, upon which communication there are thirty six portages. Whatever merit there may be in suggesting such a plan, I can not claim any.

Monsieur de Rocheblave is the person who mentioned it to me, and if it should be approved by Your Lordship, I humbly solicit in his name, a grant of the carrying place for him, and such persons as he may be desirous of being associated with him, in the prosecution of this plan.

Exclusive of the benefit to result from this project to the trade of this Province, I beg leave to: mention to Your Lordship, the advantage of having a communication which will be secure from the jealous interference of our neighbours; the assurance it will give to the Indians, of being supplied at a cheaper rate, than they can be by the Americans; the means of keeping open an intercourse with any posts it may be thought proper to establish in the Upper Country. I shall as the weather permits, order a survey to be taken by the Deputy Surveyor of the Province, to be transmitted to Your Lordship with all possible speed... ⁽³⁾

The letter probably refers to the Toronto route. It is more than likely that at this same time Monsieur de Rocheblave informed Hamilton during their discussions of an alternative Trent route. In the letter quoted above the analysis that is made of the Toronto communication route is interchangeable with any analysis that could have been made of the Trent in 1785.

Hamilton is not too interested in the benefits that will result for the fur traders who may use this less arduous route. He sees it rather as a means of defending the country and its inhabitants from the Americans. The trade will be kept from the American traders; the Indians' welfare will be protected from American high prices; and any future frontier posts will have a safe supply route home through the interior, rather than through Lake Erie.

On that same day, March 10, Hamilton also sent a letter to Benjamin Frobisher⁽⁴⁾ questioning him about his understanding of any "communication" from Lake Ontario to Lake Huron. Hamilton thought it wise to ask Benjamin since. Benjamin and his brother Joseph were known to the Quebec government as intelligent fur traders. They knew the West and the problems that different travel routes posed. In October of 1784⁽⁵⁾ they had written a detailed explanation to General Haldimand of the "hardly known" fur trade that had gone on for years to the west of Montreal beyond the Grand Portage. Through the letter they hoped to obtain for their company favour and protection as well as an exclusive right to the trade of the North-West.

Before they sent their answer to the Lieutenant-Governor, Hamilton discussed the L. Huron communication further with Lord Sidney. In his letter Hamilton hopes that British merchants will begin to form commercial agreements with the "avaricious" Americans as these former colonists have a "predilection" for British manufacturing. And while these particular economic interests are being developed he sees a healthy "peltry trade engrossing" Canadian merchants and Hudson's Bay traders.

April 7th 1785

...With regard to this last object I have reason to think there may very great improvements take place and in that view have thought it my duty to submit to Your Lordships consideration a project for a communication from Montreal to Lake Huron mentioned in my last letter-

A Plan of part of that communication accompanies this letter and as I had the honor to mention to Your Lordship, I shall order the survey of the remainder to be proceeded upon this Spring, and have hopes of getting satisfactory accounts of the natural state of the Country and of what obstacles may stand in the way of the prosecution of this design ...⁽⁶⁾



Thistles among stone fences overlook a small drumlin field in Percy Township.

Hamilton received his answer from Benjamin Frobisher on May 2, 1785.

I have seen several persons who have gone from hence to Lake Huron by the carrying place of Toronto, but have only met with one who set out from the Bay of Kentie (by the Trent River) and that so far back as the year 1761 and knowledge he seems to have of the Country he travelled thro' I consider as very imperfect, I have however laid it down, in the enclosed Sketch, more to shew that there is such a Road, than any opinion I have of its being Correct - I am told the Lands from the Bay of Kentie, to Lake la Clie (Lake Simcoe) abound with good Wood and are generally fit for Cultivation, there are several Villages of the Mississagues on different parts of that Road, who raise Indian Corn, and other grain, and whose friendship it will be necessary to Cultivate, if upon survey it should be found practicable but if I may rely on information, there is very little probability of establishing in that quarter a Communication for Boats or Large Canoes, on account of the Water being generally very shallow between the different Lakes, except in the Spring, and even then, it is described to me, as being insufficient for large Canoes, not to mention the Carrying Places, which are Six or Seven in Number to reach Lake la Clie, and I am told two of them are near three leagues in length, I am however informed that to the distance of the Rice or the Folle avoine Lake from the Bay of Kentie, there is plenty of Water for Boats of any Burthen- From all these circumstances as related to me, I judge a Communication that way without paying any regard to the Carrying Places to be from the want of Water totally impracticable, however as I believe there is no Man in the Country capable of giving any certain information about it, I think a Project that holds out so

many advantages to the Province at large ought not to be relinquished, until it is found upon Survey, to be represented really impracticable...⁷

Frobisher was looking for a good inland trade route to Lake Huron. In the complete letter he dismisses the Ottawa River route because of its "eminently dangerous" nature. He finally urges that the Toronto Carrying Place be established instead of the "Bay of Kentic to Lake la Clie" way.

But for the historian his report asks more questions than it answers. Why had he so little information about the Trent system? He must have known every important trader and many voyageurs. However, he only spoke to one man who gave him a very poor account of the journey at that. His informer told him that the upper lakes were too shallow for loaded boats and spoke of the Lower Trent as the easily traversed portion.

Whatever beliefs this experienced and reputable Frobisher may have had, he cannot dismiss the Trent Valley as a trade path, for there are four valuable remarks made in 1815 and 1816 which show that fur traders of an earlier time used it.

In Reuben Sherwood's memoir of his voyage up the Trent (1815, see appendix), the author makes two references to the feats of former travellers.

At Boboaygeon,

The first stream is the one used for canoes to pass up and down. but the larger or Northern stream is that which the fur traders formerly used to run their boats up and down.

At Fenelon Falls,

The falls are a perpendicular pitch of 17 feet and there may be a fall of 3 feet more in the distance of 300 paces up to Cameron's

Lake, The fur traders used to take boats past this place on rollers of wood without the help of horses or oxen for the small distance of 50 yards.

On one Owen map of 1816 the upper rapids at Boboaygeon had this marking, "The Great Rapids formerly navigated by Traders." And finally at Otonabee Landing (near Peterborough) at the foot of the Chemong Lake portage the map has indicated that

The whole distance hence, thro' the Tripe Lake (probably Stony and Clear Lakes) to the Head of this Portage (Chemong) said to be 50 or 60 miles: it is frequently navigated by the traders Batteaux tho' a strong rapid all the way.

Why so little was known of the Trent waterway cannot be determined until further documentation is unearthed, which can tell us in what years fur traders made use of this system. It is possible that the route was used by the French traders but that British conquest in the early 1760's brought a halt to their commerce. And it is also possible that the route may have come back into use as a result of the interest shown in it in 1785.

Perhaps Henry Hamilton wasn't sure of Frobisher's facts either for on May 22nd 1785, John Collins was directed to explore the Trent.

Quebec, May 22, 1785

... you will proceed upwards to take a survey of the communication between the Bay of Quinte, and Lake Huron by Lake La Clie (by the Trent).

You will particularly note the depth of water at every necessary place and mark the soundings on your plan or chart. The parts navigable for the different sorts of crafts -- the nature of the

soil, and its produce particularly timber. The Indian tribes, on the communication, their numbers, disposition, etc. What tract of land it may be necessary to purchase, and at what rate. Calculate the time and expense of rendering the different portages, etc., practicable, consider and weigh well the disadvantages as well as favorable points. The time which the transport of goods would require if the roads were in good condition. Consult the merchants at Montreal, upon the idea of erecting stores at the different convenient places, and if you find they are desirous of encouraging the project, write me immediately.

Your prudence will suggest the necessary measures. I wish you all health and good weather, and am, Sir, Your most Obedient and most humble Servant,

(Signed),

Henry Hamilton.

John Collins, Esquire, Deputy Surveyor General.⁸

In this first order the thrust indicates an interest in a practicable water and land communication for the fur trade, that would include fertile areas for settlement and timber resources for harvest. A week later new instructions change the tone somewhat.

Quebec, 28 May, 1785.

Additional Instructions to John Collins, Esquire, respecting the surveys in the upper Country.

You will take especial notice in your report of the stations which may be most advantageous for the erecting forts, redoubts, or batteries,--having in view, first the protection of the shipping or small craft, secondly the advantages of giving shelter and security in case of an attack from a regular force, or in the event of an Indian War. The nature of the soil, the distance of commanding

grounds, the means of procuring water, and of keeping communication by land and water, are to be considered. ⁹

Here Indian and American threats necessitate the discovery of a route that is also defensible. Hamilton wants an alternative waterway on the Trent in case American warships take hold of Lake Ontario or Indians threaten to attack the Bay of Quinte homesteads.

Benjamin Frobisher was obviously very pleased with Collin's work for his enthusiasm is unbridled in his December 15th, 1785, letter to Henry Hamilton.

Suffer me to remark that the province must reap the most lasting advantages from it, being convinced that a communication of transport between them, (the lakes) will not only lead to the Extension of Our Agriculture, and Commerce, but also to the Establishment of a Formidable Frontier against our American neighbours ... ¹⁰

John Collins¹¹ finally mapped out the communication in 1785 his walk across Percy predated the first survey of the township by ten years and the first settlement by thirteen years. His almost straight line course crosses three streams and possibly a fourth that may be Percy Creek. Collins mentions the eligibility of the overland trail since he has also gone around the long way, up the river and has met falls and portages at every step.¹²

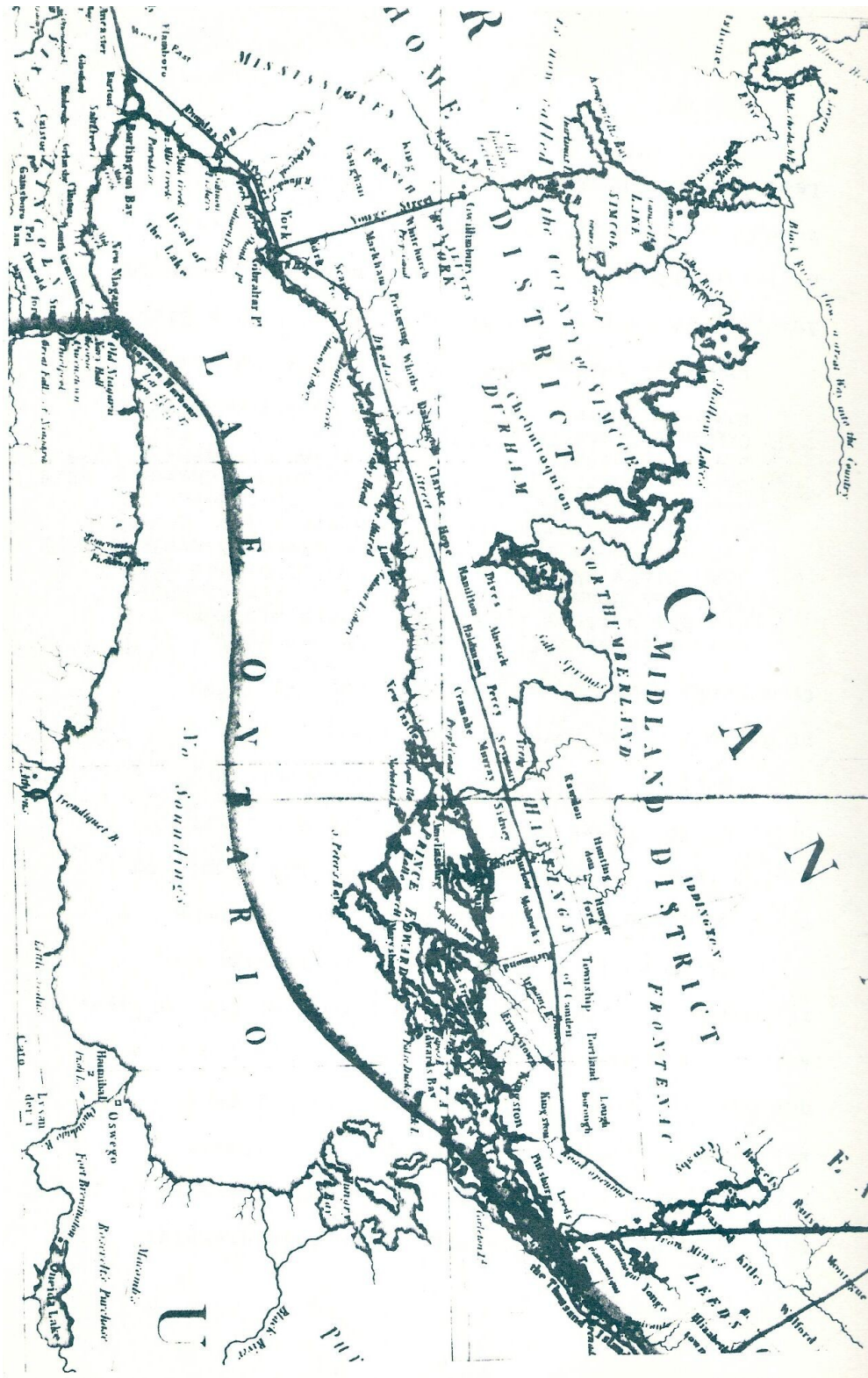
To the government the more important discovery in this vicinity had been made by Collins near the Percy Boom entrance to the portage. "A Salt Spring discharges into this River, Three Gallons of the water makes one Gallon of Salt, the Natives make great quantities of it ...¹³ News of this spring even reached Governor Simcoe and he states in a letter of December 7th, 1791, to Henry Dundas that this has given him a "singular pleasure".

A salt spring would be considered an inducement to settlers. They could raise pigs and then salt the pork for sale to the troops. Interest in this particular site demanded further exploration and in late June, 1792, William Chewitt, a Deputy Surveyor, made his way to the actual spring.

...29th June-- at 6 A.M. began blazing the route to the Salt Spring, being about four miles and a half, the first part for about a mile is swampy; arrived at the spring about 9 A.M. and upon examination found it to be a perfect mudhole about two and a half feet in diameter, with no run from it, containing about 12 gallons and strongly impregnated with sulphur to the smell and taste nearly like a solution of gunpowder, which induced me at first to believe it had been some imposition of the Indians, but upon baling out the water and clearing it of mud, we found a clay and gravelly bottom, the water rose from 10 A.M. to 10 A.M next morning, the same height, very clear and about the same quality...¹⁴

The spring never amounted to very much but its fame made it a landmark which found its way onto Smyth's 1800 map¹⁵ of Upper Canada. The portage is not placed on this map but is replaced by a "salt Springs" title which sprawls over part of Percy and Seymour. Because of this the draughtsman has been forced to squeeze the two township names away from where they ought to be. For some reason he has also included a non-existent "Dives" township above "Hamilton". Everything above the Trent River was still Indian land and is labelled "Immense Forests, Hunting Country".

By 1800 there weren't more than ten to fifteen families settled in Percy. The township had been mapped by William Hambly in 1795 and in July of 1796 Aaron Greely made comprehensive field notes by concession and lot. He listed whether soil was poor or good, what types of timber existed, how hilly or level a lot was and whether there were brooks, rivers, millseats or swamps in a specific area. Neither man makes any note of the portage. Not long after these first surveys were completed, Asa Danforth and Aaron Greely became agents for the township. Their duty



The “Salt Springs” landmark in Percy is more important to Smyth on his 1800 map than the Percy Portage.

was simply to bring in the first settlers to Percy and start them farming. The list of settlers which they produced for the government in 1797 included twenty-six names

June 17, 1797

Ezra Wildman 18/3
Rolluff Whitney 19/3
Barnabas Brunson 23/3
John Dicky 24/3
Elihu Lincoln 12/3
Solomon Woodworth 14/4
Samuel Pitts 24/1
Samuel Danforth 22/1
John Dunn 15/1
Gardner Cleaveland 18/1
Stephen Ticknon 12/3

Thomas Gastin 17/1
Amasa Brunson 24/2
Elias Turner 20/1
Daniel Silver 9/4
Resolved Cleaveland 18/1
Ahner Silver 14/3
John Richardson 17/3
Benjamin Richardson 18/3
Joseph Richardson 19/3
Roger Merrill 24/3
John Devine 16/3

When two years later a Deputy-Surveyor named Augustus Jones provided the government with a list of the settlers whom he found actually living in the township, the number was nowhere near twenty-six. Less than ten people were working their land.

Thomas Gastin - Lot 17, Con. 1, about 10 acres partly cleared, said to be gone to the States to
Bring in his family.

Gardner Cleaveland- Lot 18, Con 1, no improvements, said that his sickness prevented him
improving.

- also said that he is gone to the States to Bring in his family and settle.

Elias Turner- Lot 20, Con 1, about 2 acres partly cleared, said to be in the States

Justus Spalding- Lot 14, Con. 2, about 10 acres clear.

Resolved Cleaveland- Lot 19, Con.2, about 8 acres cleared, occupied by a tenant.

Barnabas Brunson- Lot 24, Con. 2, about 10 acres cleared.

Abner Silver- Lot 14, Con. 3, about 3 acres cleared, not settled.

Jacob Dingman- Lot 12, Con. 3; about 4 acres cleared.

Roger Merrill- Lot 24, Con. 3, about 4 acres cleared.

Ezra Woodworth- Lot 14, Con 4, a very trifling improvement, gone to the States sometime since.

Richard Sharp- Lot 12, Con 4, a small house and a trifling clearing.

Eliha Lincoln- Lot 12, Con 5, about 6 acres cleared.

Rufus Well- Lot 13, Con 4; about 2 acres clear, living in Cramahe.

Amos Brunson- Lot 23, Con 4, about three acres clear.

Signed A. Jones

D.P.S.

Since Jones' report showed that the original agents had cheated the government, it was damning evidence against them. The first and possibly greatest scandal of Percy's history became public in July of 1799. His Honour Peter Russell, presiding over the Council Chamber at York, spoke against the wrong-doers in angry tones and dealt severely with their ways, using cleansing corrective measures.

The Board took into consideration the Reports made by Mr. Jones on the state of the townships of...Percy, together with the Counter Reports of Mr. Rogers, Mr. Greely, -

In pursuing these Reports and counter reports, the Board meets with hardly anything but additional proofs of the fraud, duplicity and unprincipled selfishness of the original Nominees of those Townships, who never took to settle them with new inhabitants, appear to have brought into them persons already settled in the province and in many instances have only borrowed Their names—

The Board therefore earnestly recommends that the order of the president and Council, by which the returns of the Persons said to be settled in those townships are confirmed, be suspended and that no Warrants issue for any of those lots until the 1st of July 1800 at which time if any improvement of a house and five acres be made, a warrant shall issue to the person equitably entitled thereto, which warrant must be taken out within three months from that date or the lot will be declared open. Those who have already exceeded

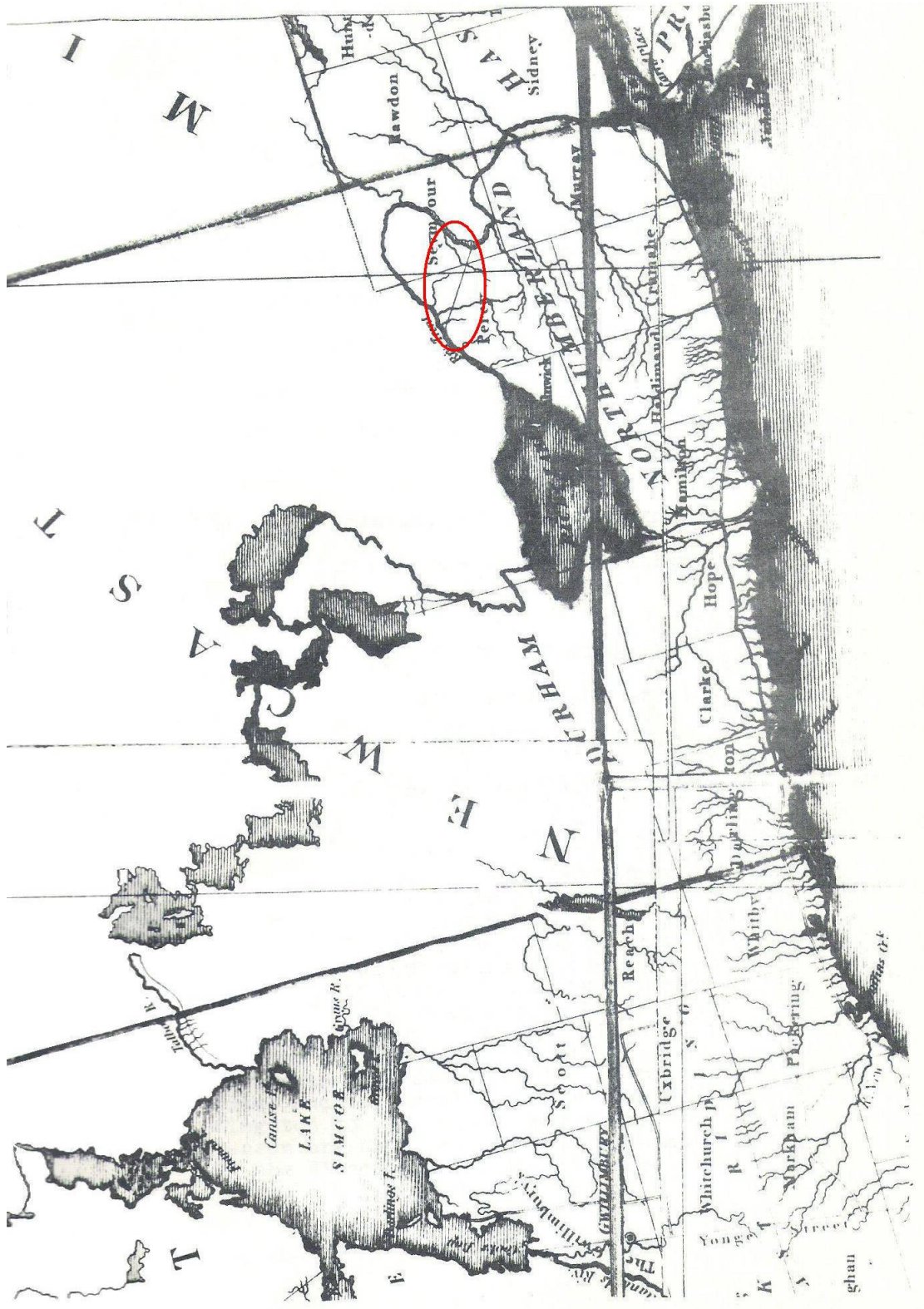
that quantity, and are settled on the lots, may have their warrants immediately.

Signed P.R.¹⁹

The Chewitt-Faden map of January 1813 corrects many of Smyth's errors. Most important is the addition of the four main Trent portage routes which Collins included in 1790. The "Talbot" (beside the Talbot River) and the "Chemong" (from Peterborough to Chemong Lake), look very much like paths on the map, and the "Ganaraska" (from Rice Lake to Lake Ontario) has become a proper road. But the Percy Portage can be mistaken for a lopsided township boundary for it appears to have been drawn with a ruler. Much like Collins' path this one passes over three creeks though the second one is fabricated. The mapmaker does place the upper end of the trail quite correctly some distance east of Rice Lake and not at its head.

The Chewitt-Faden map's days were numbered for it would soon be proved vague to the point of unbearable inaccuracy. The end of both the Napoleonic Wars in Europe and the War of 1812 in America made possible a renewal of British government interest in the Great Lakes. The work that followed was undertaken strictly in the interest of defence.

In 1815 Sir Edward W.C.R. Owen was appointed commodore and commander-in-chief of the British naval forces on the Great Lakes, and he in turn gave to his brother Captain William Fitzwilliam Owen²¹, the post of chief hydrographer in the area. The years following the war were not calm ones on the inland water in Ontario, and intense naval activity called for new and accurate navigation surveys.



On the Chewitt-Faden Map of 1813 a straight thin line marks the portage.

The map work done on the Trent during that period by Sherwood, Owen, and company was undertaken for defence purposes also. The specific advantage which it afforded the navy is outlined in this 1815 letter.

...The communication with Lake Huron by way of York depends like that of Lake Erie upon our coasting vessels being enabled to slip along shore at favorable opportunities by running from post to post. But as superiority may by unforeseen events be balanced or actually lost to us, it will be well to guard against its effects by opening the communication by the Trent and intermediate Lakes from Kingston to Lake Simcoe and every reason urged for the completing that by the Rideau applies to this proportionably to its importance. More strength of population is required in the interior, and the settlement and cultivation of every part bordering on Lake Simcoe and other interior waters is in this respect of consequence. They have the facilities of water communication without tempting their settlers to enter upon speculations which may draw them from the improvements of their farms as is the case upon the Great Lakes...²²

Reuben Sherwood's²³ sketch and memoir of the route to Lake Simcoe view the river in May and June 1815 before locks or dredging were introduced, and is therefore of inestimable value to Trent River historians. A guide, he realized his inadequacies as a mapmaker and so gives his full attention to a detailed description of the waterway, its portages, and landmarks. He can also make good value judgements concerning which transportation route is best in light of his immediate travels and previous knowledge of the needs of military, trade and settlement expeditions.

Sherwood pays close attention to the Percy Portage. Approximately twenty-two miles from the mouth of the Trent he enters Nonwattonunk Lake (Percy Reach previously Trent Lake).

At the head of Nonwattonunk Lake we came to the ten mile carrying place, there is good land for a road, and a few inhabitants already settled in the Township of Seymour, don't know what concession as this land is not surveyed, Oak and Pine Timber in great abundance. From examining my sketch with all the difficulty I encountered in passing the difficult rapids from Robinsons²⁴ to the foot of Rice Lake I am of opinion that the carrying place will be most Eligible. . .

In his commentary to this point, he echoes Collins' conclusions about the good land and difficult alternative river route. But now though, thirty years later, a few farmers greet him on the west bank of the river, probably at Percy Landing (Percy Boom). Rather than follow the portage Sherwood prefers a north-westerly course to test the waterway., and he finds himself at Percy Creek having ascended nine feet over a one and a half mile rapid.

...Up this stream at this time loaded Batteau might pass two or three miles (I am told) by only clearing out the fallen timber...

He adds to this comment when he arrives at "H" (on his map close to present day Hastings)

...At H there will be required a dam and lock to make it navigable for loaded boats at low water, as the water was barely sufficient on the 24th May-at the head of this rapid²⁵, the carrying place leads off and to Robinsons, and I am inclined to think from my traverse that five miles in a direct line will fall

in with Percy Creek when it can be made navigable...

In a letter accompanying his memoir Sherwood tells Colonel Myers that he has "taken pains with the Indians" to find the sources of the different rivers passed by. It is possible that the Indians told Sherwood of the navigability of the Percy from either their own hunting experience or from ancestor's tales. Since the Percy flows far back into the township, Indians of an earlier century may have used it (when it was free of Lumbermen's debris) as part of a portage to avoid the falls and rapids.

Sherwood's plan of the route is clarified further in his letter of 22nd June 1815 in which he creates a transportation highway with its centre in Percy.

...I have recommended the carrying place from Robinsons to Rice Lake, instead of the water round, and would advise that Boats should be built at Rice Lake to ply upon the waters to Coninanticocok (Balsam) only, and that the Boats from the Kingston and Conappanee Rivers should only go up to Robtnsons. In carrying on this navigation you must be aware that Lands are yet unpurchased from Robinsons upwards. I am of opinion that if the township of Seymour was thrown open for actual settlers, it would fill up on the waters this year, by People of the Country or discharged soldiers but if purchases should be made from the Indians, Streets can be formed upon the plan of Yonge Street, at every carrying place...²⁶

Sherwood envisioned one major portage that must be dealt with on the Trent waterway. This was the "Percy", The "Chemong" would be straightened to make it a five mile stretch and the "Talbot" (Ouskebawkning- green leaf place where we leave the river) could be avoided by damming and clearing the Talbot River for a canal. But the ten miles through Seymour and Percy were unavoidable, and because of the great length a scheme had to be devised to make the traverse seem less awesome.

The Sherwood proposal suggested that a good road be built on top of the Indian path, over which men and supplies could be moved with rapidity and ease. Boats of all sizes were to be maintained in quantity and good repair at each end of the portage, so that their weight and bulk would not have to be grappled with every crossing, Supply stations might be located at either end stocked by the farmers whom Sherwood hoped to attract to the "streets". In this way passage back and forth between Lake Simcoe and Kingston had to be broken at Percy.

Edward Smith's²⁷ 1816-17 map is further evidence of the design of this plan. Lieutenant Smith, 70th Regiment, was working with Lt. George Darley Cranfield, 90th Light Infantry Kingston, and Captain W.F.W. Owen R.N. on the whole communication that both Collins and Sherwood had previously been investigating. The final composite of their work known as the "Owen Map",²⁸ differed from the earlier studies in expertise with which it was drawn and precise compilation of data.

Smith's main concern was the "Percy Portage", (a name first used by him I believe). His path's total length reached fifteen miles, six furlongs and one hundred yards; a good five miles further than any previous determination. On the map the trail, marked in great detail, leaves the river some way west of "Little Bobakaijuen", later known as Crook's Rapids, and today Hastings. It pushes six or seven miles south and then curves gradually to the east for the same mileage to Percy Landing.

The trail passed over the present sites of Dartford and Warkworth. Only a few wise farmers were on these sites. The most northerly settled farmer who is plotted was McNutt situated on Concession five, lot thirteen. Above his property the trail is called "Indian Path" along which there is no habitation. Below and as far as Percy Landing, the old path has been repaired and is referred to as a "road". Beside this road, ten or eleven farmers have cleared some land. Even a potash manufacturing building existed.²⁹

Accompanying the map are some extremely interesting remarks made by Lt. Smith. They outline the townships riches; its fertile land, fine fish and creeks, lumber and millsites. The detailed analysis that is given of the creeks might have been part of the surveyor's imaginative scheme to

build inland canals to Warkworth or Dartford and thus shorten the long trip. It is more probable though that Smith was examining the land to see if its wealth could support hungry troops who would be traveling to the Upper Country.

No.2 Water Communication Between the Bay of Quinte and Lake Huron

Remarks on the Percy Portage surveyed by Lieut. Smith (10th or 70) Regt.

Between Robinsons and the Rice Lake in ascending the River Trent are two Falls and nearly a continuous Rapid, to avoid these and at the same time to cut off a considerable angle in the River is the object of this portage- The Road which as far as McNutts is extremely good, lies in the Township of Percy, the land everywhere very fertile, the principal farms are Mallarys and McNutts, the latter has considerable quantity of cattle and his land is under very excellent cultivation.

Great advantage accrues to the Settlement from the vicinity of Percy and Mill Creeks by means of which an extensive lumber trade is carried on in the Spring of the Year, the former of these streams presents many admirable situations for Mills, none however have as yet been established Percy Creek takes its rise from the Rice Lake and empties itself into the Trent, 2 ½ miles N. of Robinsons from its source to its confluence with Mill Creek it is much obstructed with old fallen timber and is very shallow and rapid having an average breadth of 25 feet, as far as this point Canoes ascend in the fall of the Year for the purpose of fishing - The Creek abounding at that season with peculiarly fine Trout and Salmon.³⁰

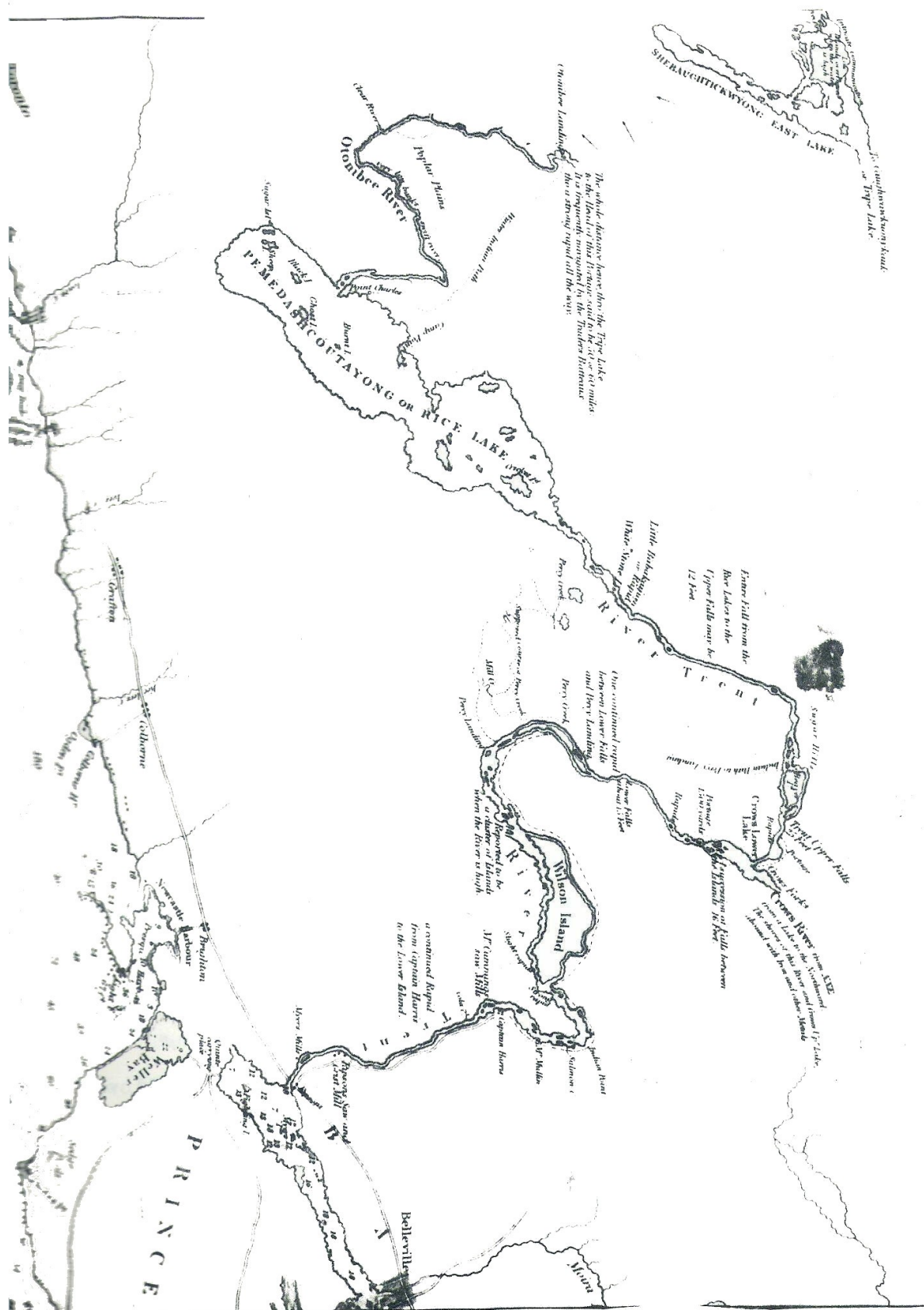
From this point the breadth and depth of the stream gradually increases, but it continues rapid until within 1 ½ miles of the mouth when it becomes smooth current with a breadth of about 50 and depth of 5 feet.

The general breadth of Mill Creek is about 20 feet depth 1 ½, the stream very winding and rapid obstructed much with old logs of trees.- There is no settlement beyond McNutts- The total length of the portage by measurement 15 miles, 6 furlongs, 100 yards.

But this fifteen mile Percy Portage is certainly not the same portage that is marked on any of the earlier maps. In 1790, 1813, and 1815 the trail was almost straight, and measured eight miles seventy six chains, and ten miles. It is not likely that early explorers straightened out such an obvious angle or misjudged the mileage by almost half. The largest Owen Map in the National Archives in Ottawa solves the problem. There, a quarter inch long ink line begins from the head of the "Little Bobakaijue" directed slightly toward the south-east. Smith's Percy Portage is just to the west of this marker which reads "Reported Path to Percy Landing about nine statute miles".

What actually happened to that shorter route can only be surmised. When the officials and Surveyor-General read Sherwood's report they were probably very impressed with his division of boat transport at Percy. His Yonge Street settlement plan also would have pleased them. But when Smith arrived in Percy a year later to make a road, he could see settlement stretching from east to west over the first four concessions next to an already worn road, and not along the ancient nine mile portage. Instead of trying to "grow" habitation along the old trail he decided to follow the present pattern which ran quite far west before it turned north up to McNutt's farm. Above McNutt's an Indian Path reaching towards the Trent could conveniently be transformed into a wider road. Along this road the pattern of settlement would scatter farmers who would be encouraged to settle there by the government as the years passed. This then was to be the "downtown Yonge Street" of the Trent Valley; a place where bustling activity would never cease. The proposed "Chemong" and "Talbot" sections would come later and would become almost suburbs.

Today it is apparent that there is no Yonge Street in Percy. Somewhere in the decades following Reuben Sherwood's vision, new theories and interests emerged which made the portage obsolete.



Soon after Smith's and Owen's surveys, pleas and rough plans to the government were advocating that canals be built from the Rice Lake to the Bay of Quinte. In 1820 J.W. Bannister proposed that a Government Lottery should pay for this work. He later hoped that unemployed labourers from Great Britain and Ireland would construct the canal.³¹

Once the inhabitants had a taste of this kind of thinking, the "old fashioned" portage was doomed. A portage was an adequate mode of transportation for a trade or military route but it could never satisfy the many incoming settlers whose increasing prosperity made fertile their imaginations. They wanted a canal.³²

The advantages likely to accrue for them from the fulfillment of such a dream were best articulated in November 1833 by N.H. Baird, a civil engineer studying the waterways.

...To the country immediately bordering on the river, the advantages are too apparent, from the harassing inconvenience experienced in dragging every species of commodity and provisions required for the many wants of new settlements through, perhaps the worst roads in the Province, and obviate the many heart rending scenes of endurance, scarcely to be credited by an eye witness,

...The facility for the transport of Lumber from the waters above, and from the different manufacturing establishments now existing, and which must soon double, will form a very prominent feature in the advantages likely to follow...

To Government, the benefit must come more immediately home, in the increase in value of the many thousands of acres on, and contiguous to its (Trent R) banks...

...To this add the still more incalculable benefit this Province would derive from the Marmora iron works being set in operation...

...When the Trent shall be rendered navigable, the Settler and Merchant may have their goods shipped under their own eye at Montreal wharf, pass along the Lachine, Ottawa River, and Canals at Carrillion, Chute Aux Blondeau and Grenville, along the Rideau canal, up the Bay of Quinte, along the Trent navigation, Rice Lake to Peterboro' without ever once being disturbed after leaving the Montreal wharf, to say nothing of the diminution in freight, which must as a matter of course follow-and on the other hand it requires no stretch of the imagination to anticipate all those settlements in a few years contributing materially towards the export Trade and that Wheat, Pot Ash, Staves, etc. must be re-shipped as return Cargoes...³³

Baird's conclusions convinced the officials of future years of the need for canals. The impressive rationalizations which today result in the destruction of this land were eroding it then also.

The Trent River was to be made navigable. The particularly tortuous stretch from Percy Boom up past Campbellford to Hastings would no longer cause any trouble. Not only had the Percy Portage bypassed this section but six other paths had done so as well.³⁴ They were either short one mile lifts around the falls, or less hurried longer winter and hunting trails.

The Indians land paths which had everywhere unmazed the thick forests of the Lower Trent region could never have destroyed the beauty that was. As the Sagetewedgewam ("river hard to travel") lost its meaning so to the river lost its peaceful portages.

On the banks of the Otonabee Trent University,
August 1973

End Notes

NAC National Archives of Canada- Ottawa
AO Archives of Ontario- Toronto
M&S Ministry of Natural Resources-Maps and Surveys
Whitney Block, Toronto

1. NAC - VI/409

A Plan of the District of Nassau in the Province of Quebec.

"For the service of his Majesty's Governor and Council Compiled in the Surveyor General's Office Pursuant to an Order in Council of the 22nd day of Feb. 1790"

Samuel Holland - John Collins

Scale two miles to an inch

Surveys used to compose map

- The N. Coast of L. Ontario by Lewis Kotte and James Peachy in 1784.
- Niagara River to the Falls by Lieut. Tinling, 1785.
- Communications from Toronto to Lake la Clie by John Collins, 1785.
- Toronto Township by Alexander Aitkin, 1788.
- The South Coast of Lake Ontario from Niagara Eastward and the rest of the plan Southward and Westward from the Falls, are taken from Sketches.

The Collins map reprinted here is from Guillet P.41.

2. The Trent Region had originally been surveyed by John Collins in 1785.

"Deputy Surveyor-General John Collins was actively engaged in the earliest surveys of Ontario. He operated at Kingston in 1783, and westward of it in the townships of Ernesttown, Fredericksburg, Adolphustown and Marysburgh, in the following year. He accompanied Sir John Johnson in 1784 with the party of U.E. Loyalists under Captain Michael Grass and assisted in their settlement administering the oath of allegiance to them under a Special Commission. But he had been connected with Canadian survey long previously, having received an appointment from Major Holland as early as the 8th Sept, 1764 as Deputy Surveyor-General. Sharp differences of opinion occasionally arose between Major Holland and Mr. Collins, as, for instance in the laying out and settlement of Kingston, and in these disputes he seems to have had influence enough with the Governor-General to enable him to prevail, probably by the backing of Sir John Johnson. Outside of his professional life very little has come down to us about him. He was an ardent Freemason and in 1787 founded St. James Lodge in the King's Rangers at Cataraqui." -from 1905 Ontario Bureau of Archives Report P. CXXIX

3. Hamilton to Lord Sidney- March 10, 1785

MG 11 Q24, Pp 242-243

NAC

4. "Benjamin Frobisher (1742?-1787) was born in Yorkshire, England about 1742. He emigrated to Canada, and embarked in the fur-trade as early as 1764 in partnership with John Welles, and he was later associated in turn with James McGill, Richard Dobie, and his brothers Joseph and Thomas. So far as I can discover, he never went west of Grand Portage but looked after the

Montreal end of the business of Frobisher and Co. in which his brothers were partners with him. He died at Montreal on April 14. 1787."

From Documents Relating to the Northwest Company.

By W. Stewart Wallace M.A.

Champlain Society, 1934.

In 1785 Frobisher drew a map of the Ottawa, Trent, and Toronto routes to Lake Huron. None of these three different trade routes are drawn accurately at all. It is reproduced in Guillet, P.133.

5. Frobishers to Haldimand - October 1784

Series Q V 24-2 Page 409

NAC

6. Hamilton to Lord Sidney- April 7, 1785

MG 11 Q24

page 248

NAC

7. Benjamin Frobisher to Hamilton- May2, 1785

C.O. 42 Vol. 47

Page 132, Guillet

NAC

8. Hamilton to Collins - May22, 1785

Report of the Archives of Ontario

Page 372.

9. Hamilton to Collins - May 28, 1785

Report of the Archives of Ontario

page 373

10. Benjamin Frobisher to Hamilton - Dec. 15, 1785.

R.G. 4 A1- NAC

Volume 29

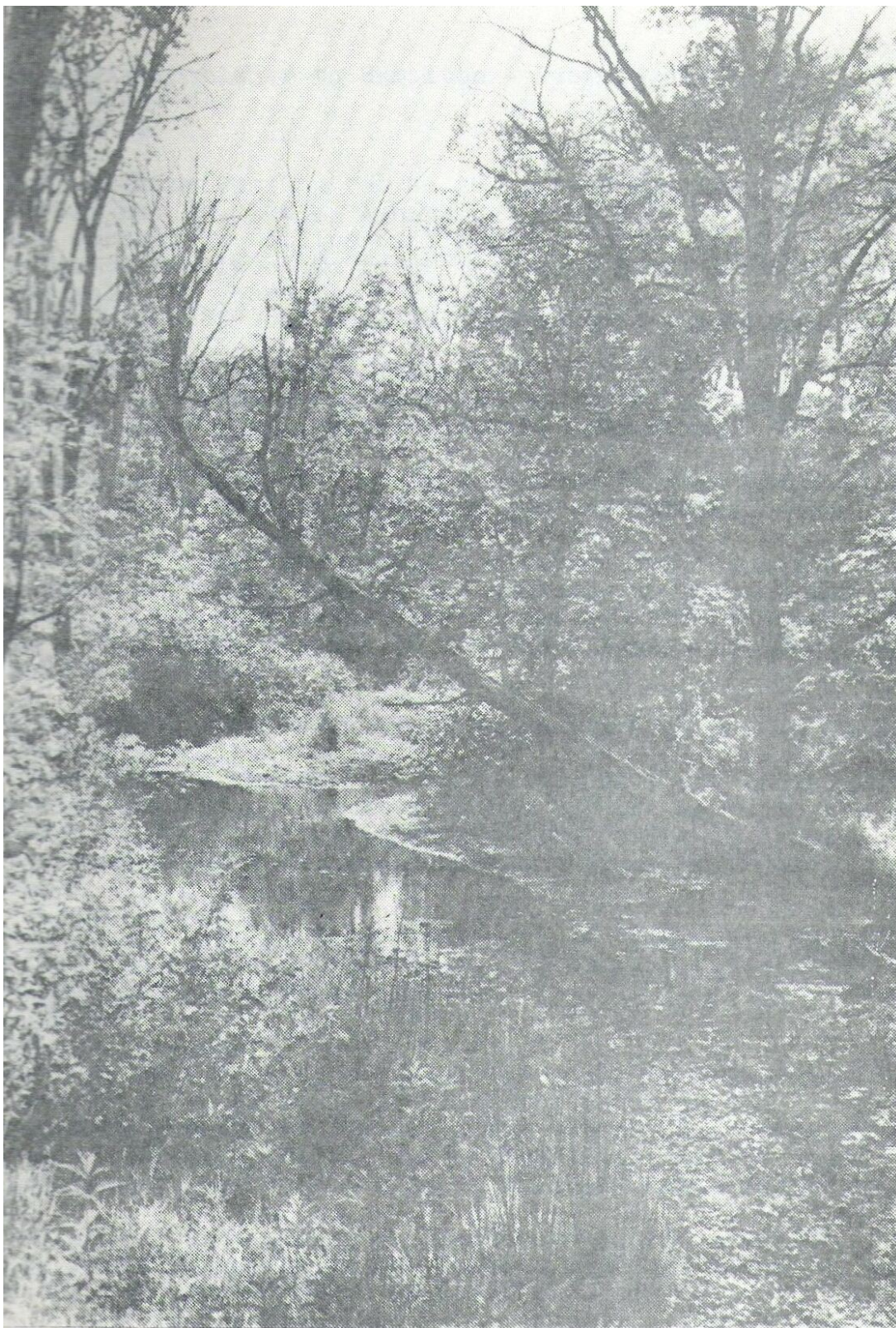
11. John Collins was instructed to explore the Trent on May 22 and 28, 1785. I have not been able to find an' account by Collins of his early trip. In the National Archives two reference cards prove that he did make the journey.

10th Oct. 1785 John Collins, Expenses of expedition to Lake Huron

22nd Nov. 1785 John Collins

Paylist of persons employed on the survey on the route of communication from Cataraqui to Lake Huron.

I was never able to find these documents even after an hours search with an archivist who was working on the papers.



The beauty of the meandering creek is seen from Brickley Bridge.

A letter of May 5th, 1792, from Quebec from Collins details a journey made by the surveyor up part of the Trent in the year 1791, July 27 through 29. Since it is a very early picture of the river I have included it in the appendix.

12. From Collins' notes on the 1790 District of Nassau Map (Healey's Falls)

"This fall is twelve feet high, the hill you ascend at landing is on a level with the top of the Fall, the Carrying Place across is twenty-five Chains in length, the road is good and you embark on a level with the Water.- "

(Middle Falls)

"This Fall six feet high, the Hill at landing is twelve Feet, the Carrying Place across the Point, is twenty Chains and the road is level and good to where you embark-"

(Ranney's Falls)

"A Beautiful Fall of fifteen feet high, the bank at Landing is three feet, the Carrying place on the opposite side is agreeable to the dotted line being forty chains in length, and a good level road to where you embark, you then descend a Hill of twenty feet-"

The dotted line spoken of just above can be seen if one looks carefully at the Collins map that has no notes upon it in the Archives of Ontario.

13. Note on 1790 District of Nassau Map

14. From Chewitt's 1792 Diary from June 22 to July 5 Field Notes

Vol. 1 PP. 176-178

M&S

This complete journal is informative and quite entertaining. It is also another version of the waterway to Percy Reach and describes a portage that would have been lost otherwise. This portage connected the Bay of Quinte to the Salt Spring. Chewitt sketches this path and the river on a colourful map at M&S. Mr. McDonell who accompanied Chewitt has also written an article on the Salt Spring which is more of a scientific analysis of the water itself. M&B.

15. "A Map of the Province of Upper Canada describing all the new settlements, townships etc. with the Countries Adjacent, from Quebec to Lake Huron." Compiled for Major General John Simcoe by David William Smyth Esq. Surveyor-General. Published by W. Faden, April 12th, 1800.

16. M&S-Hambly, Patents N34 1795

-Greely, Field Notes #286 1796

17. Land and State Book of Upper Canada

June 17, 1797

NAC

18. Land and State Book of Upper Canada

June 17, 1797, NAC

This 1799 list by Jones is the very first unofficial census of Percy Township. The

remarks give the historian rare clues to the true settler history. Turner, Silver and Woodworth, for example, who are not registered on the 1803 census are noted by Jones as having either returned to the States or not settled.

-1803 First census found (A.O.)

Annual Return of the Inhabitants of the Twp. of Percy

Benjamin Richardson(servant)	Burnabas Brunson
Thomas Gastin	James Merriam
Rufus Wells	John Dingman
Giles Stone	Gutar Dingman
Resolved Cleaveland	Richard Sharp
Thomas Curtis	Jeremiah Wood (servant)
John Grover	Osimus Brunson
Aron Holt	Roger Merrils
Jacob Dingman	Amasa Brunson
Frances Warner	Susanah Merriam
Charles Trip	Joseph Jones
Abraham Cronkite	

22 men, 22 females, 9 males above 16, 25 males under 16, 2 females above 16, 27 females under 16, 2 servants,
(conflicting report of 45 males under 16 total=127 page 29 Guillet, Annual Return)

19. Land and State Book of Upper Canada
July 1799, NAC

20. "A Map of the Located Districts in the Province of Upper Canada from the latest surveys in the Surveyor General's office by William Chewitt, Senior Surveyor and Draughtsman Under the direction of Francis Gore esq. Lieutenant Governor, by William Faden, Jan.1, 1813 A.O"
21. "Sir W.F.W. Owen was born in 1774, entered the Navy, as Midshipman in 1788, serving in the ships Vengeance, Hannibal and Cullodon. In 1808 he was taken prisoner by the French and detained at Mauritius for two years. He was employed in the survey of the Bay of Fundy and Nova Scotia and promoted to Rear Admiral in 1847, obtaining the rank of Vice Admiral in 1854. He died at St. John, New Brunswick, in November, 1857, aged 83 years. Admiral Owen acquired property on Campobello Island, Passamaquoddy Bay, New Brunswick from which he was known as "Campobello Owen."
From Simcoe County Pioneer and Historical Society Pioneer Papers No. 5, Barrie 1912
He also worked on the Great Lakes for his brother between 1815 and 1817. The Admiralty then sent him into African waters and other places for almost twenty years.

22. Transaction of the Colonial Office Records

- Naval establishments
- Survey of the Lakes
- 1816 Lower Canada No. 141.

23. His father was Loyalist Thomas Sherwood, first settler in United Counties of Leeds and Grenville in June 1784. Reuben (1775-1851) conducted township surveys as early as 1799. From 1809-1820 he made government surveys dividing townships: Marmora, Nelson, Pittsburgh, Sherbrooke, Augusta, Bastard, Bathurst, Lansdowne, Leeds, Nassagawaga, Yonge. Richard Birdsall served under him at one time.

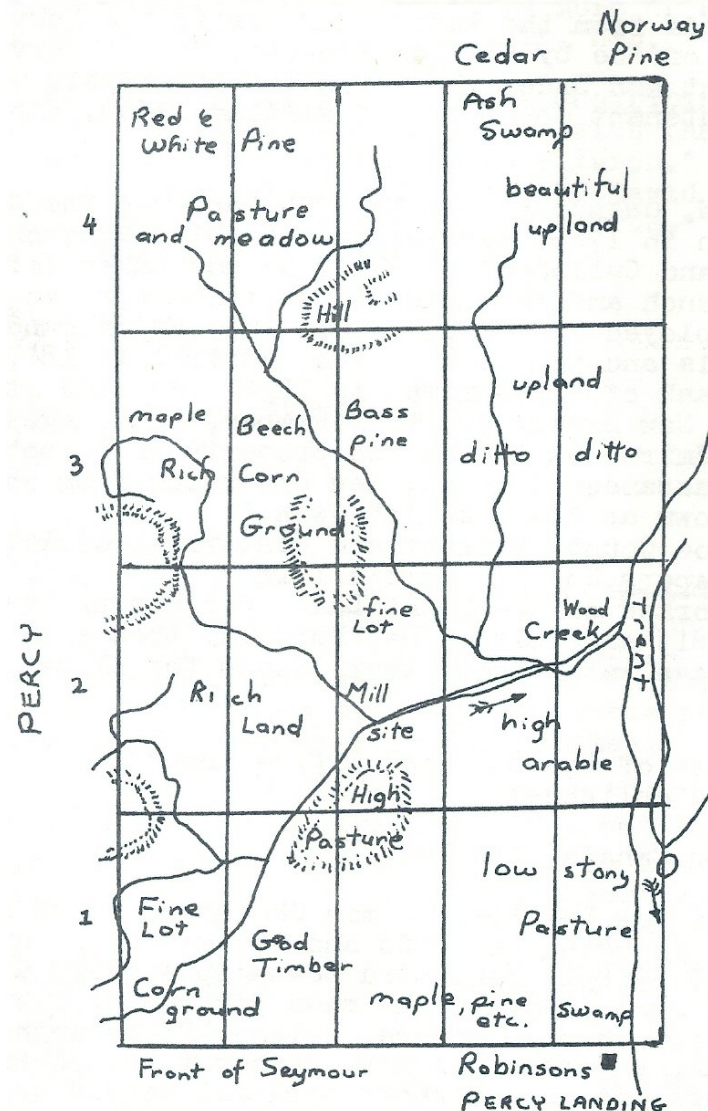
-Reuben Sherwoods complete memoir is printed in the Appendix

MGII Q 142, Pt. 1

Pages 3-14

NAC

24. From the Field Book of Seymour Township. William Browne, 1819.



Seymour was first surveyed by William Browne in 1819 (M&S). In Browne's field book a sketch of the west side of the Trent shows Percy Landing in the Gore below Concession one. Also in that Gore above the landing and just underneath lot five of concession one is Robinson's house. Robinson's was well known as the jump off point for the Percy Portage.

In Richard Birdsall's 1821 sketch of "a small block of land laying in front of a part of the Township of Seymour commonly called the Gore" there are three buildings shown in the Gore. (Township Papers Seymour, Con. 1, A.O.)

No "Robinson" could be found in the abstracts of deeds for the years 1790 to 1830 in any of the surrounding townships. Nonetheless a splendid letter was "excavated" from the mounds of township papers at the Ontario Archives. The letter is addressed to the famous Peter Robinson in Toronto.

"Seymore 30th May 1831

Sir,

I have understood that the Township of Seymore is to be sold by a late owner of the executive government of this Province, I think it highly necessary for me to state to you for your information, that I have made application to the Honorable Col. Wells, while this Township was in the hands of the Board of Education to purchase lot number 5 of the first concession on which lot I have resided for the last twenty two years and have made considerable improvements,- a good Frame House, Barn, a log house, and about thirty acres cleared and under fence, (?) these particulars. They go to show the situation I am in with regard to preference to purchase as I am convinced the Government will do me justice, and I am at the same time I ask to make application to purchase from you sir and am willing to pay a fair Estimate value for it.

I also was a Sufferer with Burgoyne and have resided in Canada ever since.
I beg you will favour me with an answer at your earliest conveyance.

I have the honor to be your most obedient
servant

William Robison "

The squatter leaves out a "n" in his signature. Lot 5 Concession 1 Seymour is just above the Gore but Robison may have believed that he was there technically. His testimony puts him among the oldest settlers arriving in 1809.

25. The exact position of the "lead off" for this carrying place has not been determined yet. N.H. Baird's report of 1833 in his initial survey of the the Trent River section of the Canal (P. 151, Guillet) roughly measures this rapid from whose head the portage begins.

The foot of these rapids is "immediately below Asphodel bridge, six miles from Rice Lake; at this point the 5th and last general section occurs, in extent about 1/2 mile and rising 7 feet 9 inches which overcome brings the navigation into the head or summit pond of Rice Lake."

26. See complete letter in Appendix

27. Lt. Smith's first name established by the Canadian Forces Directorate of History (Edward).

28. Different Owen maps exist in both Toronto and Ottawa. They are usually broken into sections which vary in number depending on whether a real or photostat copy is available.

In Toronto:

The Smith survey of the Percy Portage is possibly the original (Gold Mine Map). Its black ink on parchment-like paper is aesthetically very pleasing. (M&S)

The amount of detail reproduced on each of the larger copies is modified by the different draughtsmen.

A clear copy in 8 sections (A.O.) with note:

"Measured Sketch of the Water communication between the Bay of Quinte and Lake Huron, by the Rice Lake etc.etc. From the Lower Falls of the River Trent, to its Mouth by Lt. Cranfield DAQMG - The remainder by Capt. W.F.W. Owen R.N. and Lt. Smith 70th Regt. in the years 1816 and 1817 - Copied from the original surveys by Lt. G.D. Cranfield 90th Regt. Inf. Quebec 6th May 1816 (probably 1818)

Remarks:

The hight (sic) of the Ground in Feet is expressed Roman Initials- The Breadth of the River in yards by figures. The soundings are in figures.

Scale 1000 yd. to 1 inch"

In Ottawal NAC

V11/417	1817	10 sheets	extraordinary detail
V11/410	1818	5 sheets	a giant with fine colouring
VI/410	1818	1 sheet	

There are also three copies of a rather slick composite of Owen's Map done on one page. (1851, 61, 79) Part of one is included in this printing. If one of these colourful maps were reprinted commercially, it would be received joyfully by thousands of inhabitants and touring boaters in the Trent Valley.

29. There is a great deal of mystery and historical significance in the faceless names that dot the banks of the Trent on Smith's map. The houses placed on the north shore of

the river sit on Indian land before treaty and Crown Ownership. Not until 1818 was the land (Asphodel township) ceded to the government and surveyed by Richard Birdsall. The only mention anywhere in history of Captain McDonald's, Morrison's, and Dingman's uninhabited houses on the north shore, is on this 1816 map.

Kent and Wallace's land on the Otonabee River are probably the first farms in the Otonabee area.

Captain Charles Anderson at the foot of the Otonabee was the owner and operator of the Indian trading post. Anderson had taken over the trading post from an Indian named Herkimer.

Above White Stone Island (McGuire's or Conclin), lived Mr. Turnbull whose story has survived. When Robert C. Humphries made his way to Asphodel in the summer of 1819 from Pennsylvania, he came up through Percy Township. At the Trent he is said to have crossed the river on a ferry that was operated by a man who helped Birdsall survey Asphodel.

At this point, at the top of Smith's Percy Portage, the first bridge built across the Trent was constructed in 1824. In 1823 a committee studying the wisdom of building such a bridge, reported back to Parliament.

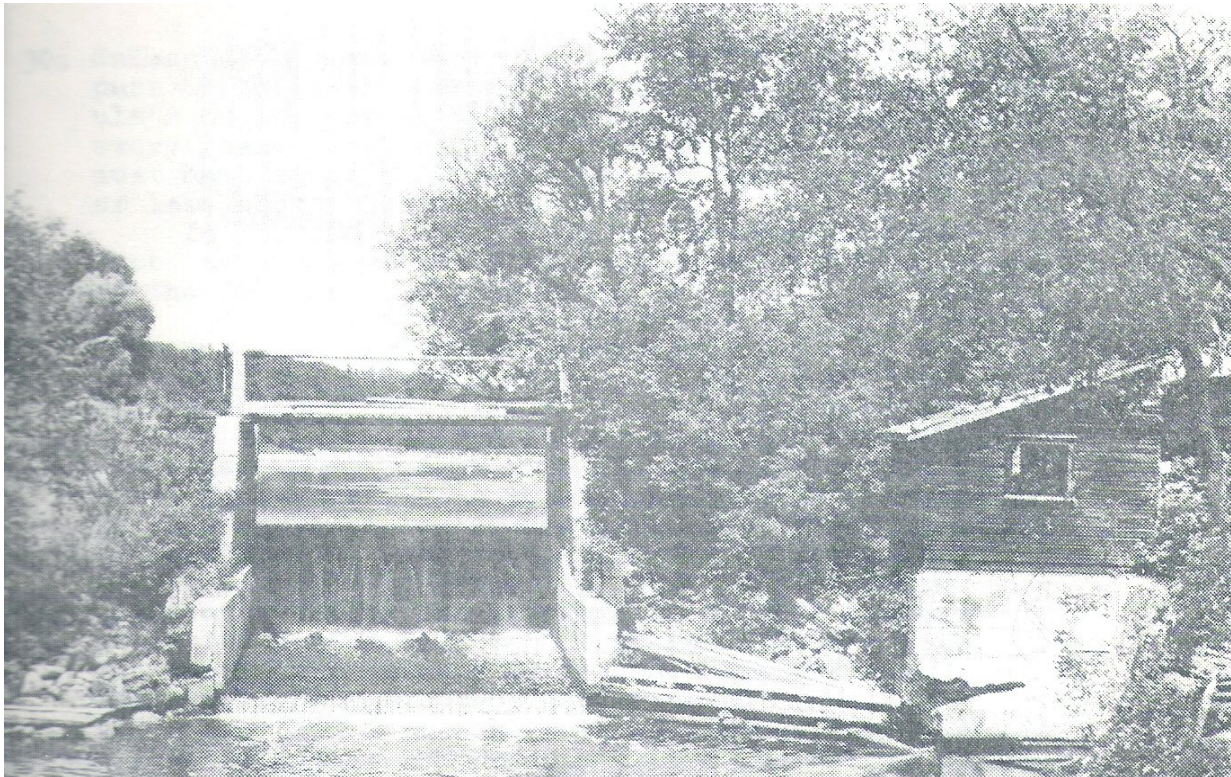
To the Honorable the Commons House of Assembly in Provincial Parliament assembled. December 24, 1823.

The Committee to whom was referred the Petition of the Inhabitants of Otonabee and Asphodel, in the Newcastle District, beg leave to Report,

That a bridge across the River Trent at the lower end of the Rice Lake, the point at which the Petitioners contemplate its erection, is absolutely necessary not only to obviate the difficulties complained of in the Petition, but also for the encouragement of others; who in the event of the attainment of this object will be induced to settle in rear of those waters, the only objection to which, your Committee are assured, is the length of time every year that the inhabitants in that part of the country are deprived of all communication with the old Settlements and Lake Ontario, such communication being an object of the last importance to emigrants thrown upon their own resources in a new country. Taking this view of the subject, and taking also into consideration the great exertions which the present few Settlers will have to make in accomplishing an object which, although of public and future advantage, the Petitioners are nevertheless from their peculiar circumstances compelled to undertake alone, your Committee would not feel justified did they not recommend the prayer of the Petitioners to the most favorable consideration of your House.

Henry Ruttan, Chairman"

Page 580, Report of Ontario Archives, 1914



The dam and sawmill at Dartford Pond, along Percy Creek.

The Smith Portage which lead to this bridge was obviously the most important road in Percy. The first Percy road book (1825-49, a rare document), is hidden in the Archives of Ontario. (Court Records No. 7 General Quarter Sessions Newcastle District Road Reports Vol. 107.) Every stretch of road that was built or repaired is listed and described in this book. The first four items are missing and items 40-50 also.. However enough information is left to trace the movement of settlement branching off the Percy Portage. Item ten is dated 1828, "from between lots 19 and 20 Concession 3 to the old road--to have a road laid out and opened from the old road and to have the old road shut up, etc. " The old road is most likely Smith's portage. The farmers along the portage can all be traced in the Abstracts to the land deeds for Percy or in the Township Papers in the Archives of Ontario: McNutt, Dingland, Allan Brown, William Townshend, Leggitt, Marriam, Malary, Robinson, Masters, etc.

The dotted line marking Percy and Mill creeks is the "supposed" course of those creeks.

The canoe route is drawn on Rice Lake. This was probably the route most frequently used by the Indians.

Many Indian paths are also indicated. (See endnote 34.)

30. Salmon still made their way up the Trent in the early part of the 19th century. Early fishermen would speculate on whether or not these fish visited the ocean every year. They usually concluded that the fish must have since no salmon was ever seen in any River or lake above the Falls at Niagara.

In 1817 the inhabitants of Sidney and Rawdon wrote an angry petition to the Commons House of Assembly of the Province of Upper Canada.

This Memorial respectfully sheweth,

That we, the inhabitants of the Township of Sidney, subscribers hereto, beg leave to represent to Your Honorable House the great inconvenience and loss that we in common with all the settlers on the River Trent sustain in consequence of the practices of some unprincipled characters, who, taking advantage of the existing laws regulating the catching of salmon in the District of Newcastle, the lines of which District crossing the River Trent at some distance above its mouth, leaves them at full liberty to pursue their depredations by making weirs and dams across the river under the pretence of catching eels and whitefish, and do almost totally obstruct the passage of the salmon up the same, and when the waters of the river are very low (as was the case last season) few or none escape; and thereby cut off a very material source of supply to the back settlers. Your Memorialists greatly fear that the salmon meeting with such difficulties in ascending the river, will abandon the same, and take some other course. They therefore pray that Your Honorable House will be pleased to take this subject into Your Consideration, and extend the provisions of the salmon laws in the Township of Sidney.

Your Memorialists, as in duty bound will ever
pray.

Sidney, 12th March, 1817.

(Signed) Alex'r McDonell and others

Ontario Archives Report, 1912, p. 403

Salmon fishing in the Percy probably ended when the saw mills became too numerous. The profusion of sawdust on the water and the multitudes of oak staves. annually floated down the creeks and rivers annoyed the fish.

see Authentic Letters from Upper Canada Thomas, 1954, for an account of salmon

fishing as it probably was on the Percy.

31. Guillet, pp. 145-146

32. The Percy Portage was not completely lost after Smith's and Owen's work in 1816-17.

On the James Chewitt map of 1826 the portage is drawn as a road copied from the Owen map. (A.O.)

In 1836 Chewitt's Percy Portage is copied on James Wyld map. (A.O.)

Before Edwin Guillet's Valley of the Trent was published (1957) the author corresponded with Mrs. Helen Marryat of Hastings. They discussed the history of the Lower Trent and Mrs. Marryat sent Mr. Guillet much new information. Some of their correspondence is preserved in the Trent University Archives in the "Marryat Papers".

In a letter (Feb. 28, 1955 or 56), Mr. Guillet, referring to the Percy Portage which he sees on the Collins 1790 map says, "I did not know before I studied this map that there was a portage." From that date on the two historians attempted, without too much success, to discover where the trail had been. On March 5, 1957, Mr. Guillet closed off incoming material for his book but remarks to Mr. Marryat, "The only thing, therefore, that we could now use is any trace you can locate of the eight-mile portage from Percy Landing ..." A very rough map of the trail that Mrs. Marryat drew is in her papers at Trent.

The only other persons who actively searched for clues to the whereabouts of the old trail, before Mr. Cumming and the "Percy Portage People" were Mr. Everett Elmhurst (a local Historian), and Mr. Fred Richardson (an archaeologist).

33. Guillet, pp. 158-160

34. Three portages existed around the individual falls on the stretch above Percy Boom..

1. Trent Upper Falls--Healey Falls--included at that time 25 feet in cascades and a rapid to Crow's Forks--the 7 or 8 foot fall was called Mawlaughwong by the Indians - portage on east side of river 2730 yards to Crow's Forks. (Owen Map)
2. Middle Falls - a succession of falls between the islands 16 feet - portage 1500 yards to Point Flora - rapid to the head of the portage. (Owen Map)
3. Lower or Big Falls - Ranney's Falls - 1st fall 15 feet, 2nd fall 3 feet--portage 40 chains. (Owen and Collins Maps)

Two long portages bypassed the falls altogether.

A. From the top of Beaver Island (now Nappan) on the west side of the river, across country to Percy Boom--read Indian Path from Robinsons. (Owen Map)

B. From the top of the Middle Falls on the east side of the river, southward to Lot 14, Con. 1, Seymour approximately read "Indian Path from Sol. Harris 7 miles." (Owen Map)

There is also a short portage on the north shore of the Trent just east of Watson Island.
(Owen Map)



Ch

Chewitt's very fine 1826 map shows the word "Portage" above the path.

Appendix #1

Champlain and the Percy Portage

Champlain accompanied an Indian war party through the Trent Valley in 1615, a documented voyage that has been of great service to both historical reconstruction and regional tourism. The tourist industry, who have no pretences, believe that Champlain stopped everywhere. The self-assured historians also know the real route but each scholar "knows" a different one.

The late Leslie Frost's Forgotten Pathways of the Trent (see bibliography) has forced me to join this circle of madmen who jeer at historical truth. In his provocative and original new book Frost argues that Champlain and several hundred Indians would rather have used the Ganaraska portage from Rice Lake to Port Hope on Lake Ontario, than follow the too turbulent River Trent down through the Bay of Quinte. The author uses a much needed "common sense" interpretation of the voyage rather than the scholar's strict translation of Champlain's original memoir.

"If the traveller crossed the AB (Percy Portage) portage to Percy Landing (4 miles south of the now Campbellford), the distance from thence to Lake Ontario is 26.21 miles. In that distance the river descends 145 feet. This presently includes eight locks on the Trent Canal. Before any canal was constructed there was one rapids known as Nine Mile Rapids, and in 1867 despite the fact that there was some canalization in the lower river, 8 miles was still unnavigable (54). What then would be the choice of the traveller? Obviously if he were going to take the river route, he would take the AB portage for the reasons given. This would be nearly 9 miles by land. He would then be faced with over 26 miles of very turbulent river with the unnavigable Nine Mile Rapids. At a minimum, his portages from Percy Landing to Lake Ontario by the river route would total at least 9 miles. Thus in going by the river route from Rice Lake to Lake Ontario he would be faced with over 20 miles of portaging and carrying, including the AB portage and as well facing all of the dangers of the balance of the river. The question therefore is, Would he take the river route or would he take the Rice Lake or Ganaraska Carrying Place of 11 miles and then paddle along the protected north shore of Lake Ontario to the Carrying Place portage (where the Murray Canal is now located), a mile or so in length, leading to the Bay of Quinte? His choice would be obvious. He, of course, would take the Rice Lake Portage."

The few obtuse sentences which Champlain wrote about his journey seem to contradict this theory. After the explorer and his Indian companions had crossed the Talbot portage and had entered Balsam Lake, Champlain says,

"From here issues a river which makes its discharge into the great lake of the Onondagas (1. Ontario). Having crossed this lake (Balsam) we followed the course of the said river, downstream continually, some sixty four leagues, to what is the entrance of the said lake of the Onondagas, and on our way we portaged round five rapids, some four to five leagues in length. We also passed through several lakes of very considerable size as is likewise the said river which passes through them, and which abounds greatly in good fish."

Champlain followed the river "continually" to the confluence at the "entrance" of Lake Ontario. This would be Adolphus Reach Upper Gap at the east end of the Bay of Quinte. He thought that

the Bay was a part of the river and lake system through which he was travelling. (This accounts for his sixty-four league measurement)

His 1632 map shows the Trent waterway and verifies the above interpretation of his voyage. On the map the river is very fat with many lakes, and enters Lake Ontario at the Upper east end where the St. Lawrence meets the Trent. If Champlain had portaged to Port Hope he would have realized that Port Hope was not near the "entrance" to Lake Ontario.

Mr. Frost's theory infers that the war party was in a hurry and would therefore take the shortest and easiest route. However Champlain tells us that he hunted bear and fished with his comrades all the way down the river.

"We went by short stages as far as the lake of the Onondagas hunting continually, as is mentioned above, and when we reached it we crossed it at one end, that pointing eastward which is the entrance to the great river St. Lawrence."

The Trent Valley was a famous hunting ground for Indians from all the surrounding areas. The Indians wished to make a surprise attack on their enemies. A large number of war canoes paddling along the shore of Lake Ontario could be spotted easily Iroquois scouts. The snake-like Trent would and hide the many warriors.

Collins remarks that the Indians used the Ganaraska carrying place in the spring when the water was very high (see appendix). Champlain's expedition was travelling in the middle of September. In that season the water on the lower Trent had calmed somewhat and more of the river would be navigable.

Although Champlain's measurements are often inaccurate, he says that he portaged five times, "some" of these portages 4 or 5 leagues" in length. The short Fenelon Falls portage was obligatory. At least two other short portages would be necessary on the lower Trent. His "some" very long portages were probably the "Chemong" and the "Percy". Champlain would have walked across the straight 9 mile portage in Percy. And then again he might have taken the longer 15 mile route for hunting and fishing close to the Percy Creek.

Appendix # 2

Memoirs of the Route from the Bay of Quinte up the waters of the Trent to Lake Simcoe.

Reference to Sketch

A

I have put the letter A as a mark of reference on the sketch for the whole of the rapid from the mouth of the Trent to Capt. Gilbert Harris's being a distance of 9 miles: but Harris living on the east side of the stream on Lot No. 6 in the 6th Concession Township of Sidney. The course & from the mouth of the River to Harris's is due north with a good Wagon Road on the East side: the whole fall in this distance may be computed at about 120 feet: Loaded Boats have frequently been poled up this rapid after the 20th of June on the decrease of the Water; but at high Water they cannot come up without the help of towing Paths and some Capstans fitted at the sharpest Points. At one mile up this stream stand Adam Myers Mills at the foot of the rapid on the SW Side. At two Miles up on the East side stand Fairfield and Ripsoms Mills, belonging to John Cummins Esquire. of Kingston, in one of those Mills is a gang of 24 Saws..

On the rapid above Cummings Mills to Captain Harris's there is a smooth rock bottom and at low Water I am of opinion it will be necessary to confine the stream to one channel, otherwise it may be too shallow for loaded Boats to pass. Every convenience of Timber and Store to carry on any Works at this place, are to be found along the banks in abundance.

B

From Captain Harris's proceed North of the Stream against a smooth current 4 Miles to Rosebushes farm, where the River bends southwest high Oak Hills appearing on each side, just above Rosebushes is a rapid of about 1/4 of a mile in length in which I took the fall to average about 7 feet. We Poled up our Canoe, and, a loaded Batteaux might have gone at that time.

At low Water it would perhaps be necessary to assist the depth of Water on one side.

C

From the Rapids at B we proceed about 1 Mile S.W. to the foot of the long Island, this Island is about 7 miles in length, and the general course may be about W.S.W.,. The south channel is largest and deepest therefore will be the best to form a Batteaux Channel in: will require one dam and one Lock.

The dam to be about 80 Yards long and eight feet high. The NW Channel is where the canoes pass upwards and loaded boats might have gone up at the time I passed without difficulty. The Land on both sides through this Country appears to be excellent a little of, from the Stream. From the Island our course is S.W. seven Miles through to Nonwattonunk Lake, being 1/2 a Mile to a Mile in width, The Township of Seymour on my right said to be most excellent Land. At the

head of Nonwattonunk Lake we came to the 10 Mile carrying place there is good land for a road, and a few inhabitants already settled in the Township of Seymour, don't know what concession as this Land is not yet surveyed, Oak and pine Timber in great abundance. From examining my sketch with all the difficulty I encountered in passing the difficult rapids from Robinsons to the foot of Rice Lake I am of opinion that the carrying place will be most Eligible.

D

From Robinsons our course is N.W. about 1½ Mile to Percy Creek; the Rapid in this distance falling about 9 feet. Up this stream at this time loaded Batteaux might pass two or three Miles (I am told) by only clearing out the fallen Timber. From the Creek our course is N.E. for 1½ Mile more to the head of the Island, the whole fall from here to Robinsons 20 feet. From hence we carried the Canoe about two miles till we pass the fall at D, which is a perpendicular of about 15 feet more down to the head of the Island. The Bottom of this river is all a flat Rock, and the Banks are good generally falling off towards the Waters Edge with a flat, and a very little clearing away of the timber from the banks would form a path.

The last mile the banks become steep the water running very swift and to appearance 3 or 4 feet deep, and will be a difficult part to make navigable. The fall at D may be easily canalled on the West side where Nature has pointed out the place.

E

From these falls the general course is NNE about 4 Miles all the way up strong rapids to the falls at E where we came to Crows Lake. These falls and rapids altogether down to D may be counted at 55 feet.

The falls are in several cascades of 4, 5 and 6 feet each, will require great expence and Labour to make it navigable.

Up Crows Lake, our course is north about 2 Miles where the rice lake branch comes in from the west. The crow branch seems to be a large stream.

F

At F we carry about 1½ Mile on the north side of the stream, on Oak and Pine plain, at about one Mile up N.W. is a perpendicular fall of ten feet, and at the head, what is called the high falls being about 25 feet, and the intervening rapids may be counted as 20 feet more is a difficult rapid to render navigable. The falls at each situation can be easily looked. The soil high and dry is excellent for roads or settlements.

G

From this we have travelled every course between N.W. South and SE passing up some small Channels and several Islands against smart currents for ten or 12 Miles, forming a bow: on the whole the base of which may be SSW about 6 Miles, then came to still Water ½ a Mile broad,

and about six Miles in length to a Bob. a. ca. qu. en or rapid of 1 Mile in length and falling about 6 feet at H.

H

At H there will be required a dam and lock to make it navigable for loaded boats at low water, as the water was barely sufficient on the 24th May-at the head of this rapid, the carrying place leads off and to Robinsons, and I am inclined to think from my traverse that 5 Miles in a direct line will fall in with Percy creek when it can be made navigable.

From H we pass up RiceLake SW about 16 or 17 Miles to the mouth of the River again.

I have sketched the most conspicuous Islands as I went along. The breadth of this Lake varies much from the deep Bays on each side, the general width is from three to five miles. This Lake abounds with masquinouge and Black Bass. The Land on all sides this water appearing high and sandy. Oak and Pine the principle Timber, some Norway Pine. The first Six Miles from the Rice Lake up the stream is a smooth current our course due north to the little Plains. then SW 4 Miles- then from West to North crooked say seven miles more where we found a dry Point to Encamp upon, having passed a great proportion of drowned land, altho the land appeared good a little distance off. Then 2 Miles NNE where the stream opens broad and we turned West is the six Mile carrying place, one mile- For the last 3 or 4 Miles the lands became better along the bank of the river.

J

At the carrying place marked J is the foot of the rapids on the river flowing from Chabaticqinating Lake, and the distance to go round by water is about 50 Miles, and, altogether about 10 or 12 Miles of rapids; all of which is saved by a short carrying place of six Miles and a half chained by myself and Capt. Anderson and even this might be shortened perhaps a Mile by forming one direct line.

This distance commences and ends with a small plain of about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile on each end - and the rest of the land excellent for Farms. It appears to me that I rose near 60 feet when at K, or Chabotiquiang Lake, higher than the Rice Lake.

From the carrying place NE about six Miles, and then turned up the West branch of those abundant channels, running between Towpenkou Islands, say one mile north - then two miles west when we came to a great opening; then W. 3 Miles to the little Plains where W. Mcan was killed: then West 3 miles to another great opening where we turned North about 6 Miles to the little Babacaqnen or rapid, and about 2 Miles more to the larger stream; both of which came from Sturgeon Lake, the first stream is the one used for canoes to pass up and down; but the larger or Northern stream is that which the fur traders formerly used to run their boats up and down.

L

At L the rapid may possibly make redecent of 7 or 8 feet in the distance of half a Mile - it will require two dams, and locks to secure an easy boat navigation. The distance to Sturgeon Lake is about 3 Miles West.

Sturgeon Lake lies Sw exactly and is about 15 Miles in length and 2 in breadth has only two small Islands, on which the Indians were planting Corn apparently good land on both sides i am told a large stream comes in at the south end thereof. We go up this Lake about 10 Miles, when we turn round Sturgeon Point, then north up the Bay about 3 Miles to the stream- Then West up the stream two Miles more to where the stream narrows, and we meet with high steep rock bank's to the high falls marked M.

M

These falls are a perpendicular pitch of 17 feet and there may be a fall of 3 feet more in the distance of 300 paces up to Camerons Lake. The fur traders used to take boats past this place on rollers of wood without the help of horses or oxen for the small distance of 50 yards. There can be no difficulty in looking these falls as the stream is very deep at the foot thereof. The water on the smooth rock for about 10 Chains above the fall is from one foot to 18 Inches in depth the 1st of June 1815 and might be confined to form one deep channel to the head of the falls.

Here we came to Camerons Lake (where Elliott died)- This Lake lies about NW, 3 ½ Miles to the stream proceeding from Coninauticock Lake; found the Land excellent round Cameron Lake, and this as well as the other Lakes abounds with bass and Masquinonge of the best flavor.

N

We follow the stream nearly West about 2 ½ Miles up and very crooked passing the rapid at N - in the first ½ Mile it is a stoney bottom, about 2 to 3 Chains in breadth for the last ½ Mile, a rapid with loose stones on the bottom, and at this time about one to two feet water, loaded boats might now pole up, but the stream will require clearing out. As it shallows, and perhaps a dam and lock may be necessary; As we enter Cominanticocok or Balsam Lake, it appears in front; say due west about 5 miles to the carrying Place at Q.

Q

The Lake lies to the North 6 or 7 Miles we pass round the south end of a large Island, in front of us, and a deep west Bay to get to what is called the 17 Mile carrying place 1:- The stream coming into the North end of this Lake I am told is rapid and extends a great way to the North.

P

From Q on the west shore of Cominkicocok Lake, we carry W to N about 2 ½ Mile to a small stream but deep, called Talbot river at P this stream bears Northerly; Its source as the Indians

informed me being a Lake lying at the South end, and betwene Sturgeon and Cominiticocok Lakes. We have the Land track to Lake Simcoe on our left at 1 ½ Mile from Coninanticocok. The Land is generally good on this carrying Place and stoney - And it appears to me that the Talbot river is much higher than Coninankicocok.

The first appearance of this creek it is about 50 links broad, in an Alder Marsh and the trees and small bushes intercept the passage very much for the first four miles, and the general course may be West. From thence the general course of the stream is SW until it falls into Lake Simcoe and there are three rapids the whole distance, being about 20 Miles by Water. These rapids can be easily dammed up except the upper one, where the banks are low, and, in the last six miles of the River there is vast Quantities of fallen Timber that must be cleared out to make the navigation complete, I enter Lake Simcoe at the NE Bay the course to the river severn about NW and perhaps 30 Miles distant 12 Mile Point appearing due west about 12 or 15 Miles, and the Kings stores on Holland River distant about 30 Miles SW where I took Yonge Street out to the Town of York 36 Miles.

(Signed) R, Sherwood
Captain of Guides to Kingston
22nd June, 1815

Sir:

Herewith I enclose a sketch and memoir of the route from the Bay of Quinte to Lake Simcoe by the way of the Rice Lakes.

I have taken pains with the Indians to get every further information of the source of the different Rivers which I passed, in case of any future period it should be thought necessary further to explore the Country behind us - and their connection with the Ottawa forms many cross routes.

I have recommended the carrying place from Robinsons to Rice Lake, instead of the Water round, and would advise that Boats should be built at Rice Lake to ply upon the waters to Coninanticocok only, and that the Boats from the Kingston and conappanee Rivers should only go up to Robinsons. In carrying on this Navigation you must be aware that the Lands are yet unpurchased from Robinsons upwards I am of opinion that if the Township of Seymour was thrown open for actual settlers, it would fill up on the Waters this year, by People of the Country or discharged Soldiers but if Purchases should be made from the Indians, Streets can be formed upon the plan of Yonge Street, at every carrying place.

My sketch and observations have been all read over at the Surveyor-Generals Office, York, and I was happy to find that my work came out within five miles of the truth in the whole distance. The Surveyor-General gave me every facility in his power towards elucidating and correcting my sketches, and expressed his willingness at all times when a professional person should be sent on similar occasions.

He gave me the Copy of Crown reserves for Eastern and Johnstown districts) on account of filling in Settlers below, the whole inclosed to Sir George Murray, Lt. General, as he is gone. I hope you will stop one Copy.

I have te te te
(Signed) R. Sherwood
Captn. of Guides

To Colonel Myers
D7 2nd M Gen.
te te te

B-138
CO 42 Canada
Vol 172, 173
1816-1817

Appendix # 3

Proceeding on my Route from Kingston to Lake Huron

Wed. 27th July set out at 6 o'clock from Capt. Singletons on the River Saganskohon the wind N.W. and blew hard, the Canoes heavy loaded were in great danger of sinking, at 11 arrived at the mouth of the river of Saggattawegewan, named the Trent. This river forms an excellent Harbour for vessels, the water being upwards of 12 feet deep, dined and set out at one o'clock passed the first rapids, killed some red salmon, the land high on the north, level on the south, the River is about 40 Perch broad, At 4 o'clock sunk one of our Canoes - encamped at 6, about six miles $6\frac{3}{4}$ from the mouth of the river, the land Good, on the north the whole distance, the water sufficient for Batteaux. Thurs 28th set out at 6 o'clock; at 10 arrived at the Head of the Rapids, good water over these rapids for Batteaux, the River from 60 to 80 perch broad, excellent land on both sides, dines at one o'clock, set out at two, here the River makes a great turn to the South, passed several large Islands; and encamped at 6:30.

Friday 29 July set out at 5:00, the land good on both sides, passed several Islands, at 8 breakfasted on a small island at the Head of the still water, found a family of Missasaga Indians on the Island, who showed us the salt they had made a day or two before, from a very great salt spring at the foot of a high hill on the south side opposite the Island, and observed that three kettles of that water, produced 1 kettle of salt and that the Indians in that part of the country all made their salt at that Spring, the salt appears to be good and well-tasted.

Sagattewegewam signifies a River of strong waters - which the Indians never attempt at this season, but make use of the portage marked N.O. which brings them into the Rice Lake, 11 miles, 10 chains of a Carrying Place from L. Ont.

Quebec 5th May 1792
Signed John Collins

Appendix #4

Important Indian Names in the Trent Valley

Trent River	- Sagetewedgewam
	- Otanibee
Talbot River	- Nummaibene Seebe or Sucker
Scugog	- Yawbashkaokawk
Seven River	- Matchedash
Long River between Balsam&Cameron Lakes	- Wesaweutay Beebe
Lake Simcoe	- Shaineong
Balsam Lake	- Balsam Copeiba Lake
	- Canenandacokauk
Sturgeon Lake	- Nummey Saukyagun
Pigeon Lake	- Shebaughtickwyong West Lake
Chemong Lake	- Shebaughtipkwyong East Lake
Trope Lake (probably Stony and Clear Lakes)	- Caughwawkuonykauk
Rice Lake	- Pemedashcoutayong
Trent Lake (Percy Reach)	- Nonwattonunk
Part of the Talbot Portage	- Oushkiebwa Kawning

Each time an Indian name was marked on an old map the spelling of the word was altered.

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- Map library

- various documents

- important ones listed in endnotes

Frost, Leslie, Forgotten Pathways of the Trent

*Mr. B.D. Sandwell, the President of Burns and MacEachern Limited, has allowed the .Percy Portage People to peruse the galley sheets of this book. We are all very grateful for his help. Frost's book won't be published until October 1973.

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Oral history, numerous people in Asphodel, Percy, and Seymour townships

Thomson, Don W.; Men and Meridians: The History of Surveying and Mapping in Canada Volume I Ottawa, Roger Duhamel, Queen's Printer 1966

A NATURE STUDY OF THE PERCY PORTAGE

The development of an area is linked directly to its geography or the physical formations of the land. The settlement and growth of the economy deriving primarily from its natural resources.

The history of this part of the Valley of the Trent country clearly follows the outline provided by its geography. An agricultural Indian people occupied the land for centuries, cultivating the rich soil, hunting the forests, and using the waters of the Trent system for transportation purposes as well as for a source of food. The early settlers moved northward into the area attracted by the vast forests, the fertile land, and encouraged by the plans concerning the great inland waterway that was soon to be developed. This route along the Trent River from Lake Ontario to Georgian Bay, was to be created by only slight alterations of the existing water system.

The area covered by the Percy Portage is located mainly in Percy Township with only the southern end in Seymour Township. Both these townships are within the combined Counties of Northumberland and Durham and lie within the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Lowland District of Canada. Of the physiographic regions described by Chapman and Putnam this area falls into the region known as the Peterborough Drumlin Field.

The portage route lies within the watershed of the Trent River, which is the largest river in Southern Ontario having a drainage area of 4,790 square miles¹. This area is located between the Precambrian or Canadian Shield to the north and the Oak Ridges Interlobate Moraine to the south. The Precambrian Shield is composed of some of the world's oldest rocks whereas the area encompassing the portage route is underlaid with limestone deposited during the time when the Ordovician sea extended over Ontario. The Trent's headwaters lie in the Shield while its lower tributaries lie over Paleozoic limestone beds.

The Climate of this part of Percy and Seymour Townships is characterized by warm summers and cool winters. The Climate of an area depends on its location and the modifications caused by the physiographic features. The proximity of Lake Ontario affects the area, modifying the climate considerably. The average temperature of the year is 45 °F². The coldest month, January, has an average temperature of 19 °F, with July, the warmest month, averaging 69 °F. The land varies between 246-1,200' above sea level, and the mean annual frost free period is 140 days.

The mean annual precipitation is 33" with the average rainfall 26" and the annual snowfall 70". The prevailing wind is from the southwest.

The glacial history explains the topography through which the trail follows. The most comprehensive theory on the glacial history that I found was that of C.P. Gravenor entitled Superficial Geology of the Lindsay-Peterborough Area. Ontario. Victoria, Peterborough, Durham, and Northumberland Counties. It is therefore his theories that I have utilized in this report. After the limestone deposits were laid by the Ordovician Sea, the next development was the Wisconsin Glacial activity of the Pleistocene Age. During this last great glaciation lobes from the arctic region pushed downwards scraping and grinding the bedrock digging out pre-existing valleys, damming rivers and then depositing the debris in great heaps and layers. Two ice³ lobes were primarily responsible for shaping the area - one from the east to the Lake Ontario basin, and one from the north that occupied most of south central Ontario. These lobes met in an east-west line south of Rice Lake to form the Oak Ridges Interlobate Moraine. The final advance of the

northern or Lake Simcoe lobe rose over the Oak Ridges moraine leaving large amounts of stony, sandy ground moraine and a drumlin field extending over much of south central Ontario. When this lobe finally retreated it formed the eskers, kames, recessional moraines, outwash and glacial lakes now covering the area.

As the Wisconsin glaciers melted from this region they formed in the upper Great Lakes Basin, Lake Algonquin, and in the Lake Ontario basin--Lake Iroquois. Lake Algonquin drained via the Fenelon Falls outlet through the Otonabee outlet through Rice Lake to Lake Iroquois.

When the water level of the Lake Ontario basin dropped, the flow from the Upper Lakes created a terrace on the Otonabee and Indian outlets, depositing gravels along the Trent River from Rice Lake to Lake Ontario.

After the retreat of the ice and the elastic rebound of the earth's crust--the streams and lakes were left with haphazard drainage patterns which are still not adjusted. The Trent River is a good example of this with its deranged drainage patterns and different moods ranging from rapids to large marshy areas and lakes. Rice Lake is believed to occupy part of a preglacial valley which was blocked by ice at its south west end.

Percy Township lies within this area characterized by glacial features, gently rolling drumlins and hollows where the Trent's tributaries twist through swampy ground. Many of these streams are actually misfits following the routes of old glacial spillways. This portion of the Peterborough drumlin field has thick deposits of glacial till over the Ordovician limestone, with only a few outcrops of bedrock along the creeks.

Percy's soil consists mainly of ground moraine with pockets of recessional moraine. The soils of the area were formed by the glacial action over the bedrock plus the water movements. The soils are varieties of grey-brown podzolics throughout all of the portage area except for small pockets of organic soils along the creek and Percy Reach. In the soil capability classifications⁴ almost the whole area is classified as #1 denoting deep soil, with high productivity for a wide range of field crops with no severe limitations. This explains the extensive use of the area for farming, although it is now chiefly used for dairy farming. Crops consist mainly of oats, grain, hay, and corn, although tobacco is grown and hog raising is also practised. The limitations to farming facing in the area are mainly due to the steepness of the numerous drumlins, and the irregular pieces of land between the drumlins.

Even though this land is good agriculturally, the development of hobby farms and parcel lots for the city dweller is steadily carving up the area, with the recreational attraction of the area spurring this trend. Cows have been allowed to erode the sides of many of the creeks and cedar poles have been cut off the land, causing the creek to degenerate as the fragile water level is lowered and the balance of the environment threatened.



The draining of Dartford Pond revealed the original creek bed.

Man has already altered much of his habitat, stripping the land of its great pine stands and over hunting the forests so that^ wolverines, cougars, lynx, and elk are no longer found in the area. He eliminated native plant species and introduced foreign species. He allowed overgrazing, limiting the development of the forest. Poor management of sewage and industrial waste has allowed the Trent River and Rice Lake to become seriously polluted, so that swimming in these waters is unpleasant and can cause illness.

New attitudes are needed to help preserve the wildlife of the area, including even such creatures as snakes and turtles for whom the public sees only in a detrimental way. Explaining the land along the ancient portage route exposed us to the delicate beauty of the countryside and made us aware of the importance of careful land management to protect the land and wildlife. The Lower Trent Region Conservation Authority covers this area and is attempting to implement conservational measures to the best advantage of the natural environment.

End Notes

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2. Lower Trent Conservation Report, 1970. P. 3
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4. Canada Land Inventory, Land Capability for Agriculture Map.
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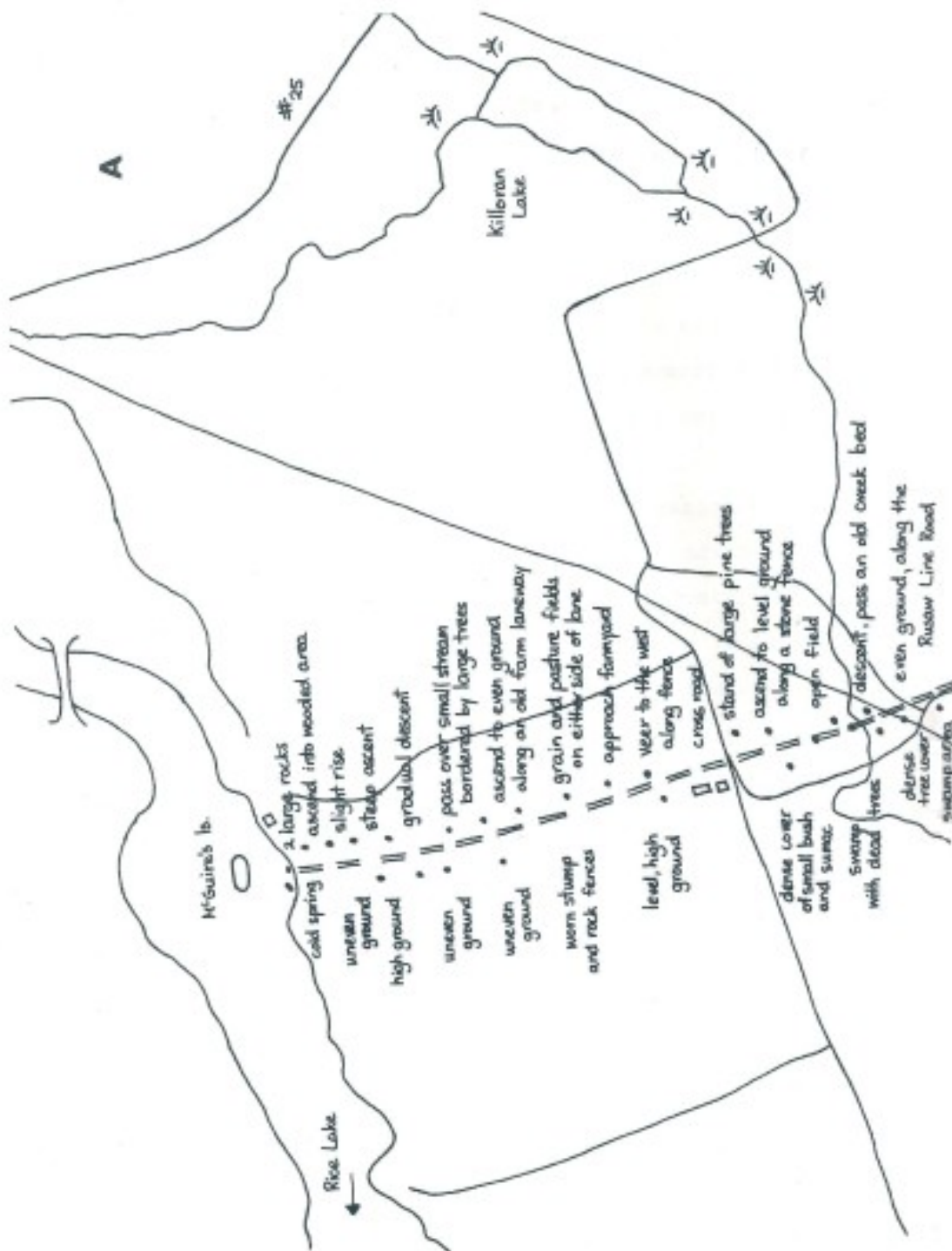
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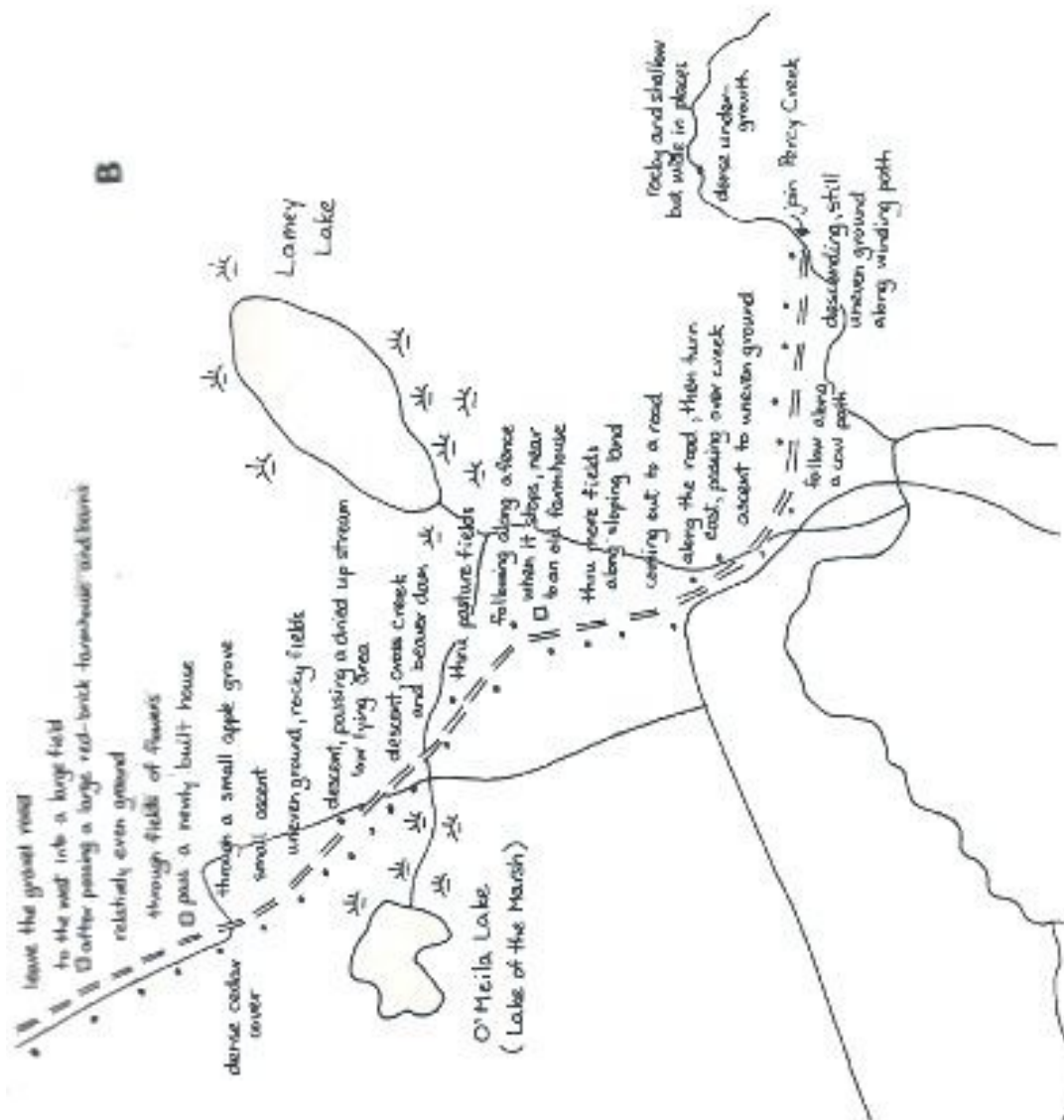
The Portage Map

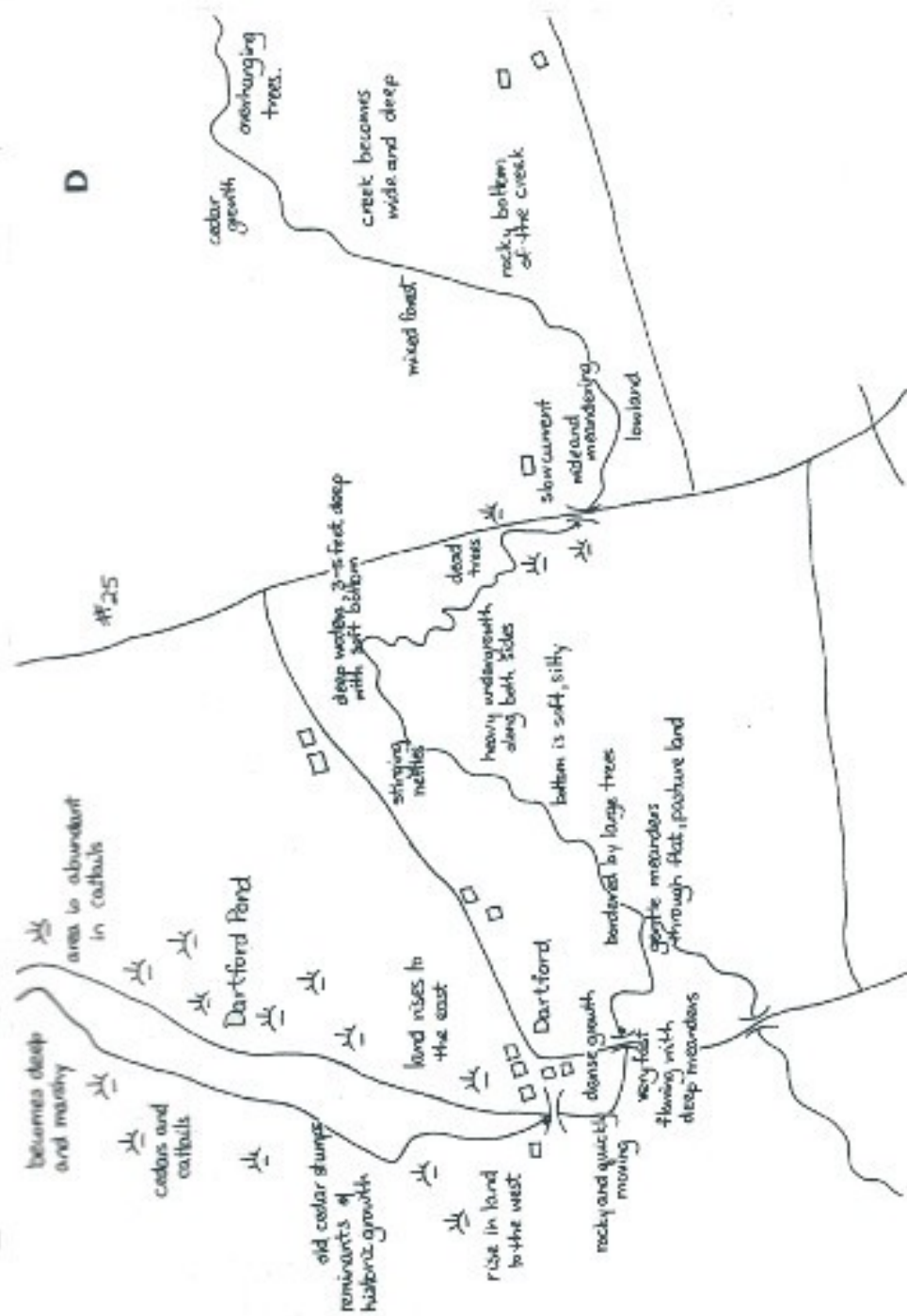
The Percy Portage was marked with a small orange and blue symbol, representing a person over water, in the summer of '73, to indicate the ancient portage used by the Indians between Georgian Bay and Lake Ontario. The historical site was marked over fields and along the winding Percy Creek, rescued by the memories of old timers and faded maps, to lift another part of Canadian history from the darkness.

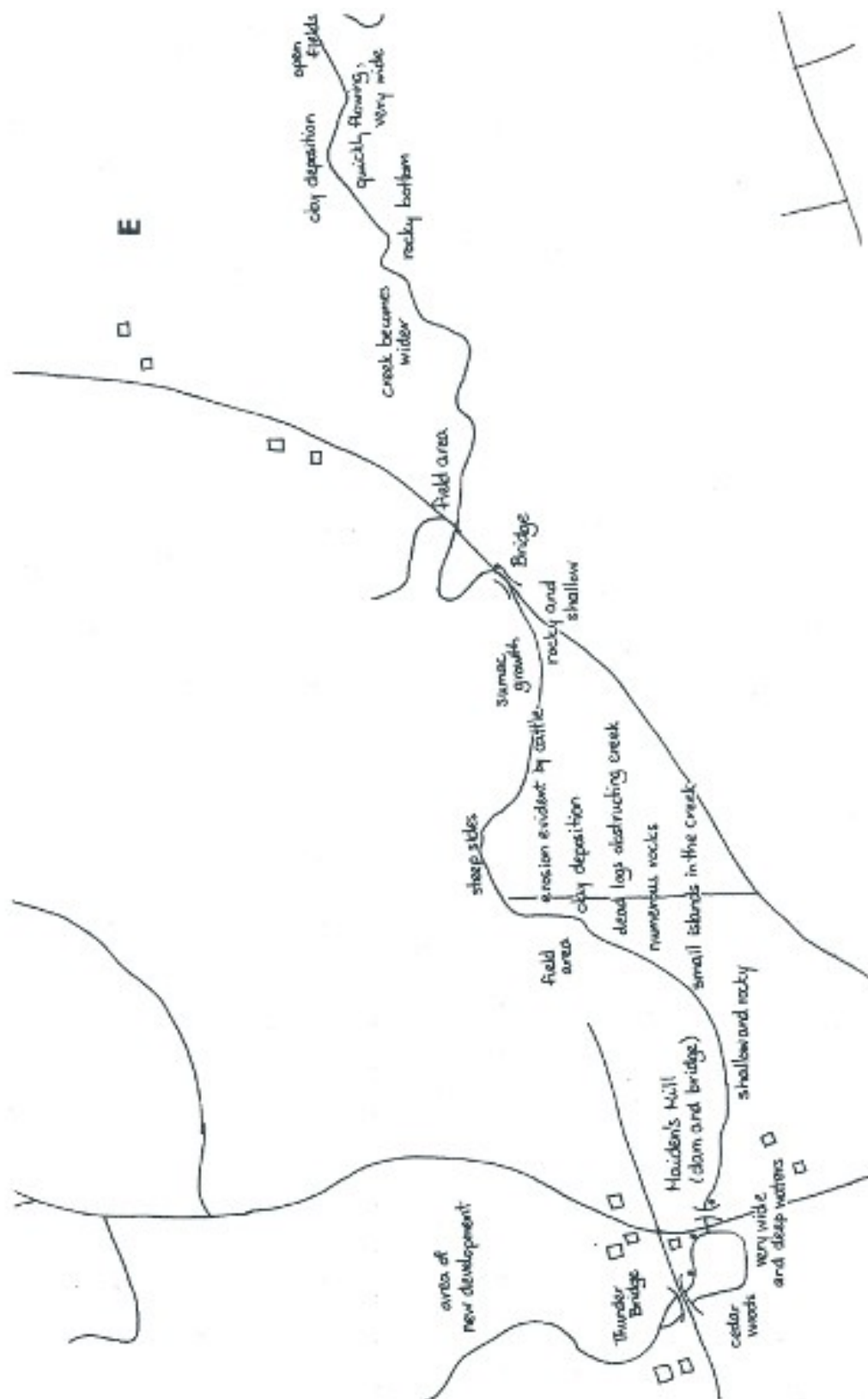
The trail will hopefully arouse the curiosity of the historian and perhaps inspire a few adventurers to undertake the following of this route. No doubt these fortunate few will wonder at the Indians perseverance and be inclined to agree that the Indians would have used the water route, following Percy Creek whenever the seasons allowed.

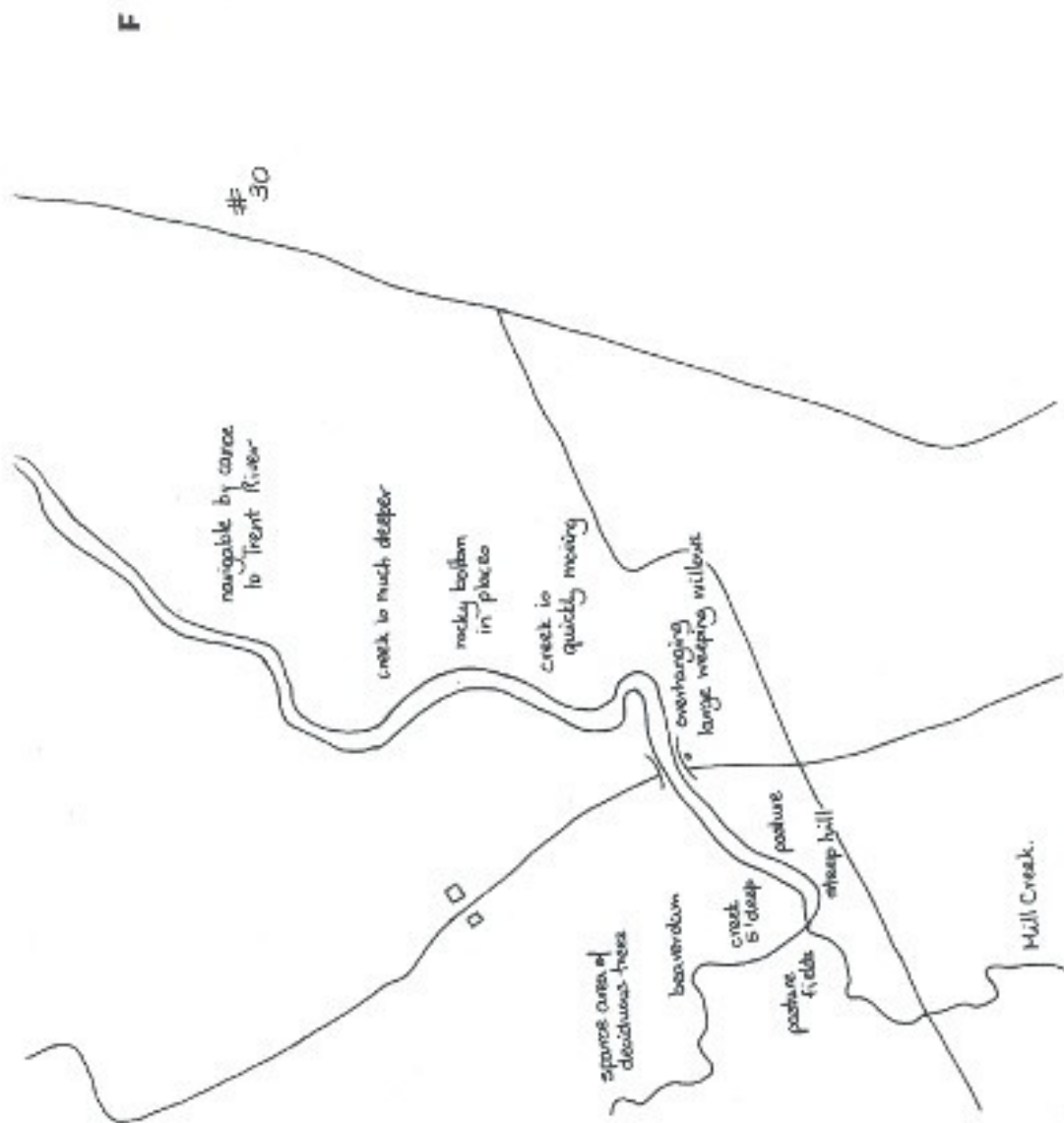
This map of the portage route is then Intended for the armchair reader as well as the few voyageurs who may venture onto the trail - warned hereby of the dogs, cows, mosquitos and wet feet they may acquire along the route. These curious ones are implored to ask the farmers permission to cross their land and reminded to keep their eyes open to the small wonders that are always hidden around the next bend. The following site studies were compiled during the field work of the portage by a wide-eyed, inquisitive, but definite amateur. With her briefings -onward friend and bon chance:

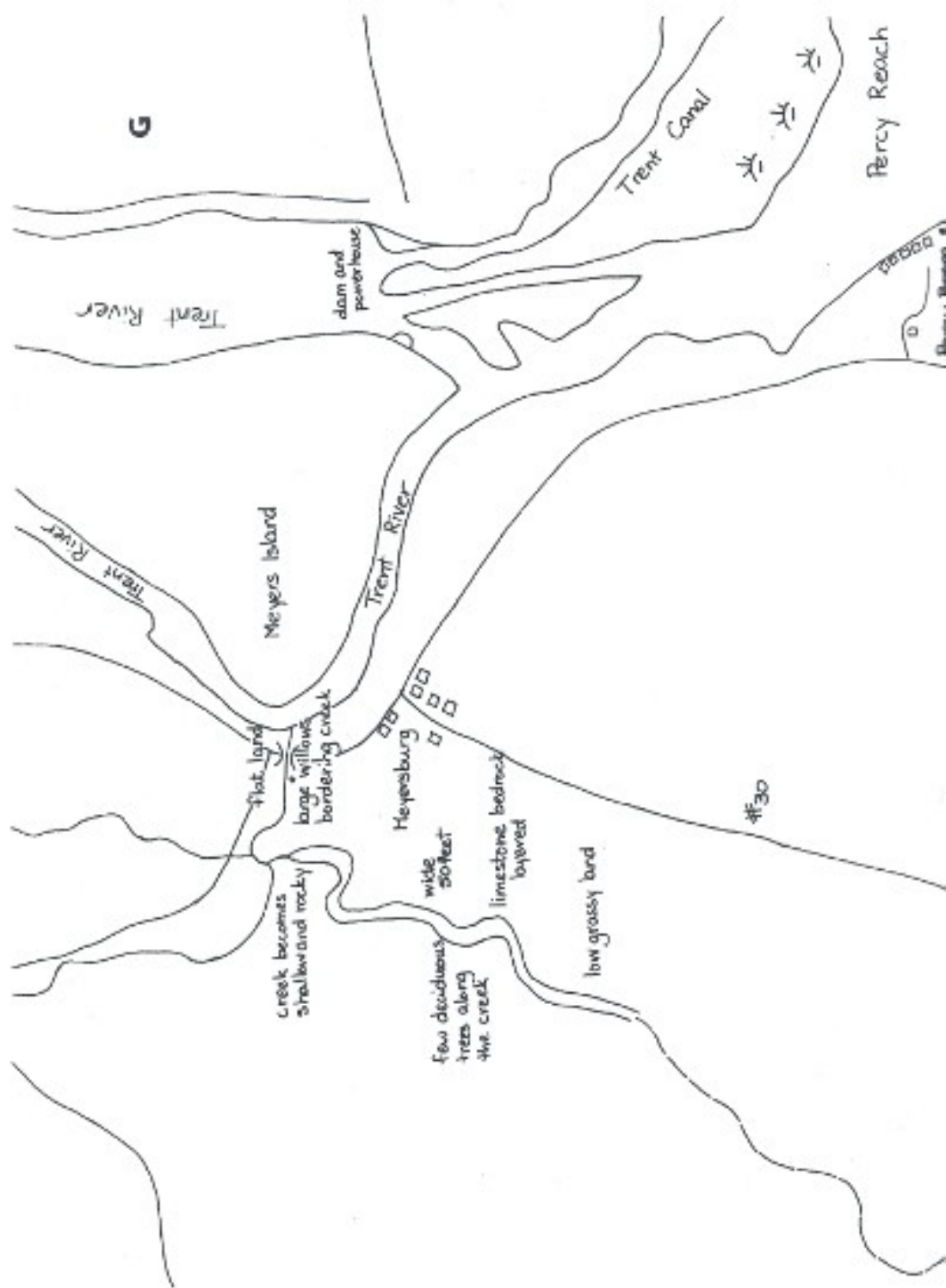








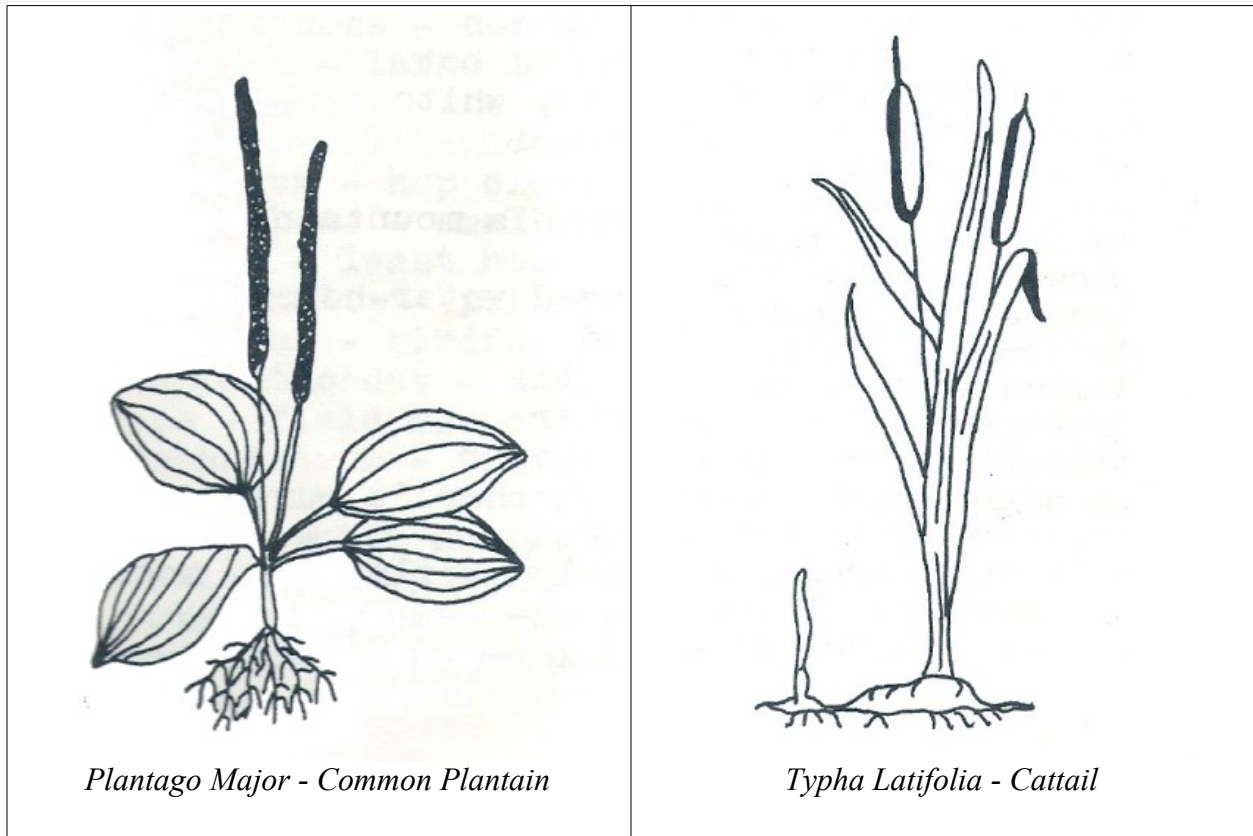




Site 1,

This first site is a conglomeration of the entire miles of the portage by land. This trek exposes a variety of wildflowers, commonly called weeds by the farmer and small garden tender. I will begin the site study with a list of the most common wildflowers of the area, which one sees every day, perhaps noticing their existence,

There is some order to the list which follows, starting with the colour green, continuing with white, yellow, pink (red) and blue (purple) flowers. The latin names are listed to the left and the common names, at the right of every wildflower. Missing in the list are the early spring flowers; violets, spring beauties, hepaticas as well as the orchids.



Wildflowers

rhys radicans - poison ivy
urtica dioica - stinging nettle
pilea pumila - clearweed
ambrosia artemisiifolia - common ragweed
artemisia vulgaris - mugwort
erigeron canadensis - horseweed, Canada fleabane
chenopodium album - lamb's-quarters, pigweed
amaranthus retroflexus - green amaranth, redroot pigweed

rumex acetosella - sheep or common sorrel
 portulaca oleraces - common purslane
 mana neglecta - round - leaved mallow
 rumex crispus - curled dock
 silene cucubalus - bladder campion
 achillea millefolium - yarrow, milfoil
 eupatorium perfoliatum - boneset
 eupatorium maculatum - spotted, joe-pye-weed, purple boneset
 daucus carota - wild carrot, Queen Anne's Lace
 plantago major - common plantain
 thalictrum dioicum - early meadow-rue
 thalictrum polygamum - tall meadow-rue
 nepeta cataria - catnip
 mentha arvensis - wild mint
 melilotus alba - white sweet clover, melilot
 lepidium campestre - field peppergrass, cow-cress
 virginicum - poor-man's-pepper or common peppergrass
 convolvulus sepium - hedge or great bindweed
 fragaria virginiana - common strawberry
 anemone canadensis - Canada anemone
 saponaria officinalis - bouncing bet
 lychnis alba - evening lychnis, white cockle
 ptilimnium capillaceum - mock bishop's weed
 allium triocum - wild leek
 pycnathemum virginiana - Virginia mountain - mint
 picanum - hoary mountain mint
 lycopodium americanum - cut-leaved water-horehound
 lycopodium virginicum - bugleweed
 lamium album - white dead-nettle
 trifolium vespens - white clover
 trifolium hybridum - alsike clover
 capsella bursa - pastoris - shepherd's purse
 erigeron canadensis - horseweed
 anaphalis margaritacea - pearly everlasting, moonshine
 chrysanthemum leucanthemum - ox-eye daisy
 centaurea maculosa - spotted knapweed
 convolvulus sepium - hedge or great bindweed
 centaurea jacea - common knapweed
 erigeron annuus - annual fleabane daisy
 aster simplex - panicled aster
 aster divaricatus - white wood aster
 aster lateriflorus - calico or starved aster
 aster umbellatus - flat-topped white aster
 aster ericoides - heath aster
 liliun canadense - Canada or wild yellow lily
 linaria vulgaris - butter and eggs, toad flax, ramstead

oenothera biennis - common evening primrose
 hypericum perforatum - common St. Johnswort
 hypericum spathulatum - shrubby St Johnswort
 hyperpunctatum - spotted st. Johnswort
 verbascum thapsus - common mullein
 sonchus arvensis- field, perennial sow-thistle
 sonchus oleraceus - common annual sow-thistle
 sonchus asper - spiny-leaved annual sow-thistle
 taraxacum officinale - common dandelion
 tragopogon pratensis - yellow goat's-beard
 rudbeckia hirta - black-eyed susan, yellow daisy
 helenium autumnale - sneeze weed
 coreopsis lanceolata - lance-leaved coreopsis, tickseed
 chrysogonum virginianum - chrysogonum
 inula helenium - elecampane, horseheal
 ranunculus acris - common or tall buttercup
 potentilla simplex - common cinquefoil
 potentilla canadensis - dwarf cinquefoil
 potentilla recta - rough-fruited cinquefoil
 potentilla norvegica - rough cinquefoil
 potentilla argentea - silvery cinquefoil
 potentilla fruiticosa - shrubby cinquefoil
 geum macrophyllum - large leaved avens
 agrimonia - agrimony
 oxalis europaea - yellow wood-sorrel
 trifolium agrarium - hop clover
 trifolium procumbens - smaller or low hop clover
 trifolium dubium - least hop clover
 melilotus officinalis - yellow sweet clover
 lotus corniculatus - birdfoot trefoil
 erysimum cheiranthoides - wormseed mustard
 brassica rapa - field mustard
 raphanus raphanistrum - wild radish
 sisymbrium officinale - hedge mustard
 brassica hirta - white mustard
 euphorbia esula - leafy spurge
 tanacetum vulgare - common tansy
 matricaria matricaroides - pineapple wild
 Lactuca canadensis - wild lettuce
 lactuca scariola - prickly lettuce
 lactuca hirsuta - hairy lettuce
 hieracium paniculatum - paniced hawkweed
 hieracium pratense - king devil, yellow hawkweed
 helianthus hiberosus - Jerusalem antichoke
 helianthus divaricatus - woodland sunflower
 solidago canadensis - Canada or rock goldenrod

solidago altissima - tall goldenrod
solidago rugosa - rough-stemmed goldenrod
solidago patula - rough-leaved goldenrod
solidago squarrosa - stout goldenrod
solidago tenuifolia - slender fragrant goldenrod
lilium tigrinum - tiger lily
impatiens capensis - spotted touch-me-not, Jewelweed
hieracium aurantiacum - orange hawkweed, devil's paintbrush
campsis radicans - trumpet-creeper
lobelia cardinalis - cardinal-flower, red lobelia
geranium maculatum - wild geranium
rosa Carolina - pasture or Carolina rose
rubus odoratus - purple flowering raspberry
dianthus armeria - deptford pink
lythrum salicaria - purple or spiked loosestrife
trifolium pratense - red clover
medicago sativa - alfalfa, lucerne
lathyrus palustris - vetchling
geranium bicknellii - bicknell's cranesbill
penstemon hirsutus - hairy beard tongue
gerardia tenuifolia - slender gerardia
epilobium angustifolium - fireweed, great or spiked willow herb
epilobium coloratum - purple-leaved willow herb
teucrium canadense — hairy germander, wood-sage
stachys palustris - woundwort
leonurus cardiaca - motherwort
lamium amplexicaule - hen bit
apocynum androsaemifolium - spreading dogbane
prekatchinskia racemosa - smooth white lettuce
symphytum officinale - Comfrey
asclepias syriaca - common milkweed, silkweed
asclepias purpurascens - purple milkweed
asclepias incarnata - swamp milkweed
dipsacus sylvestris - teasel
arctium minus - common burdock
carduus nutans - nodding thistle
cirsium vulgare - bull thistle
onopordum acanthium - scotch thistle
aster novae-angliae - New England aster
erigeron philadelphicus - common or Philadelphia fleabane
campanula rapunculoides - creeping or european bellflower
campanula rotundifolia - harebell, bluebell
verbena hastata - blue or false vervain
echium vulgare - viper's bugloss, blueweed
gentiana andrewsii - closed or blind gentian, closed blue
solanum dulcamara - climbing nightshade, bittersweet

solanum nigrum - black or deadly nightshade
lobelia siphilitica - great lobelia
mimulus ringens - square-stemmed monkey-flower
prunella vulgaris - heal-all, self-heal
vicia cracca- cow or tufted vetch, bird vetch
aster cordifolius-heart-leaved aster
aster puniceus - purple-stemmed aster
aster radula - rough-leaved aster
cichorium intybus - chicory, blue sailors
bidens frondosa - beggar-ticks, sticklight

The trail commences at the point where Rice Lake, joins the Trent River. The beginning of the trail is almost a natural marker in itself, in that a beautiful cold spring empties into the river, surrounded by large cedars, in a sheltered bay. This cold spring would have been an obvious starting point for the long portage; and is even more probable if one remembers that Rice Lake and the Trent River were approximately six feet lower before the construction of the canal and lock system. The small bay would then have been more sheltered and the shore, an excellent baching point for the birch-bark canoes.

The village of Hastings is now considering harnessing this fresh water, cold spring, for the village's water supply. Already considerable excavation has been done, exposing two pools with clay bottoms into which the spring flows.

The general topography along the first three miles of the portage is that of glacial deposition. The land has been cleared of the once magnificent white pines, hemlocks and other immense trees, exposing the rolling country-side consisting of drumlins, and till moraines. Passing near to both O'Melia and Lamey Lakes, the land appears poorly drained.

Nearing the end of the first three miles, the portage continues along the meandering Percy Creek, Salmon once swam the creek's waters, but now only brook trout, common shiner, rock bass, yellow perch, carp, mud suckers and other minnows roam the waters. Dotting the sides of the creek, among the reeds and arrowheads, squat many starry-eyed bull frogs, leopard and green frogs. Cousin to the smooth skin frog, is the American toad with his warty skin. He is not to be as readily spotted as the large bullfrogs. Continuing along the creek one may chance upon attractive midland painted turtles, basking in numbers on logs or rocks along the banks of the creek. Advance slowly and carefully along the banks of the creek for the painted turtle prefers quiet, weedy, marshy situations to large bodies of water. Besides the painted turtle, musk and snapping turtles are also to be found in these quiet waters. Please do not disturb these creatures, for they will do no harm to the creek-wader. Snakes are common in this area, but few will be seen, as they are quick to get out of one's way. The common water, brown and garter snakes can be found in this area, as well as spotted salamanders.

The fallen logs and beaver dams obstruct the natural flow of water. Muskrats and beavers were once hunted and trapped by the Indian along the edges of marsh for pelts. Today these water-loving creatures are not as numerous and need to be left alone,

Porcupines, woodchuck, striped skunk, long-tailed weasel, and mink are also not as plentiful. It is doubtful if the red fox and the white-tailed deer are still withstanding the pressures created by man. Jack rabbits, eastern cottontail, snowshoe hares, and the introduced European hares occupy this area in southern Ontario. Similar in size to the rabbits and hares are the eastern gray squirrel and the smaller, deer mouse, white-footed and woodland jumping mouse, meadow and hairy-tailed moles.

Through the farmland, along cow paths, hidden in the thickets are ruffed grouse, snipe, woodcocks, introduced wingnecked pheasants and gray partridge. More common to the amateur bird-watchers are:

mourning dove	great-crested flycatcher
yellow-throated flicker	rough-winged swallow
eastern kingbird	wood thrush
barn swallow	veery
blue jay	yellow throated vireo
common crow	warbling vireo
house wren	pine warbler
catbird	scarlet tanager
brown thrasher	rose-breasted grosbeak
robin	field sparrow
yellow warbler	killdeer
bobolink	red-shouldered hawk
eastern meadowlark	brown-headed cowbird
red-winged blackbird	rufous-sided wheatear
indigo bunting	loggerhead shrike
American goldfinch	belted kingfisher
wood duck	black-capped chickadee
black duck	Baltimore oriole
screech owl	cardinal
wood pewee	

The list of birds could continue, but it would seem confusing - so I will stop, with just mentioning those birds that one will catch sight of any day throughout the summer months. Walking through pasture fields and wading in the creek, one will catch sight of a great blue heron standing by a swamp infested with small frogs. The coarse cry from the blue jay, a diving belted kingfisher, and above one's head a soaring red-shouldered hawk, are the birds which may accompany you along the portage.



A friend from the creek.

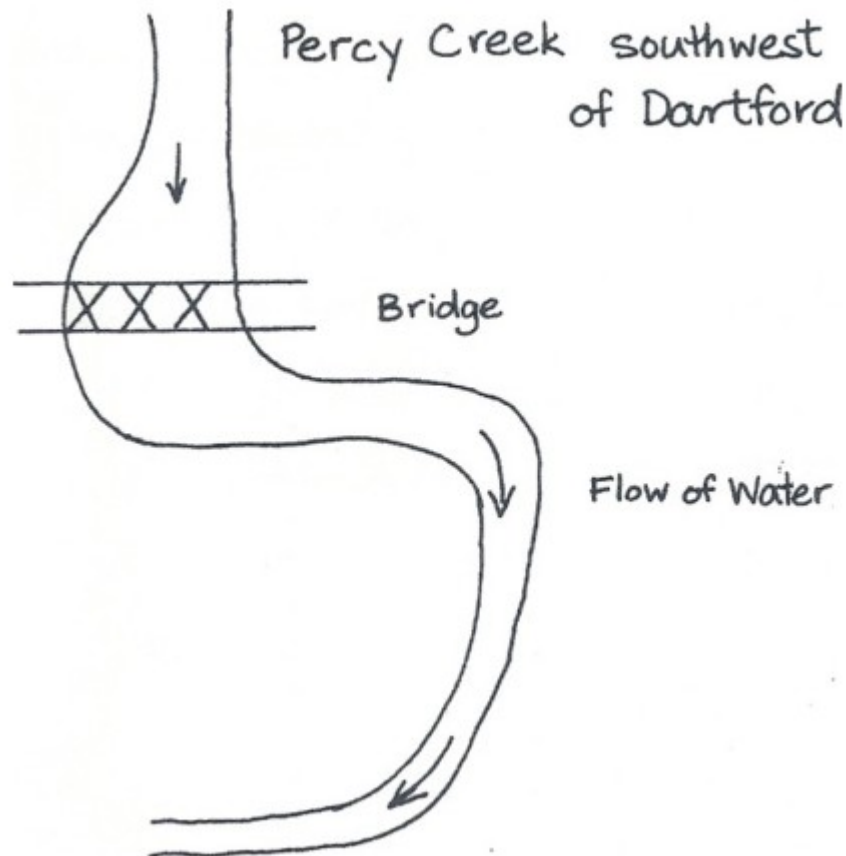
Continuing along Percy Creek, the water becomes quite deep with large areas of marsh and cattails. Dartford Pond is site #2, to be studied.

Dartford Pond is man-made, filled with a variety of living creatures. Morley Dunk lives by the dam, and runs a saw mill. Along the pond and road the following wildflowers were noted:

common ragweed	prickly lettuce
common peppergrass	barnyard grass
Canada goldenrod	spotted touch-me-not

wild carrot
tall meadow-rue
spotted joe-pye-weed
milk vetch
bladder campion
common milkweed
cattail
engelmann's arrowhead

purple loosestrife
wild iris
boneset
blue vervain
spiny-leaved sow-thistle
broad-leaved arrowhead
grass-leaved arrowhead



Here is a section of Percy Creek past the Dartford Pond showing a small meander.

Wandering further down Percy Creek one passes great stands of conifers and hardwood trees. Following is a list of the most common trees in the Percy Township area:

Conifers

white pine

white spruce

red pine
jack pine
hemlock

black spruce
white cedar

Hardwoods

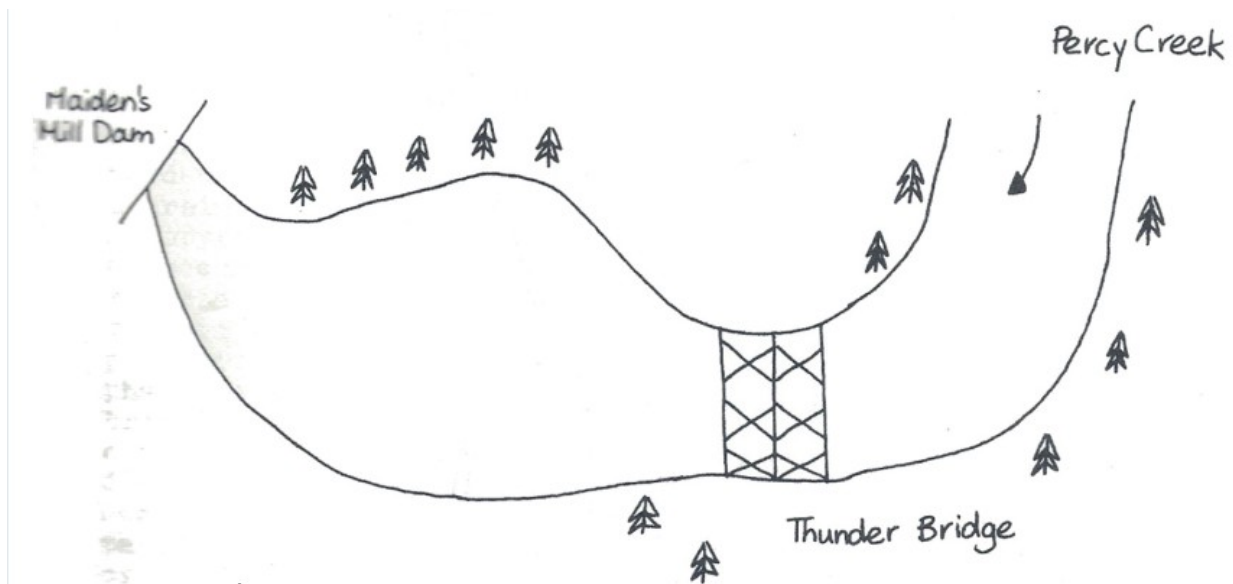
white birch
yellow birch
quaking aspen
balsam fir
poplar
sugar maple
red maple
white maple

black ash
white elm
rock elm
white beech
blue beech
butternut
basswood
hawthorn

The creek meanders from Dartford and in places the water runs quickly along a rocky bottom. Painted turtles, bullfrogs, and tadpoles inhabit the clear waters. Gazing at the surface of the water, shadows of the barn swallows flying overhead are easily detected. Again one comes to deeper waters, the place being Maiden's Mill, site#3, Hugh Jenney lives by the dam, which he has put into working order, filling the pond with still waters. The flora of this area is as follows:

white cocle
motherwort
Canada goldenrod
spotted touch-me-not
common plantain
daisy fleabane
climbing nightshade
purple loosestrife
viper's bugloss
blue vervain
chrysogonum
field horsetail
spotted joe-pye-weed
engelmann's arrowhead
bouncing bet
hedge bindweed

common dandelion
nodding thistle
3-stem rush
Canada lily
duckweed
yellow goat's-beard
wild carrot
milk vetch
green foxtail
brome grass
red hop grass
common timothy
crow's foot grass
orchard grass
common couch grass



The pond at Maiden's Mill

The next list is concerned with water vegetation which is abundant along the creek. The list includes water-lilies, arrowheads, ferns, pondweeds, duckweeds, grasses, sedges and rushes.

- nymphae odorata - fragrant water-lily
- sagittaria latifolia - broad-leaved arrowhead
- sagittaria graminea - grass- leaved arrowhead
- sagittaria engelmanniana - engelmann's arrowhead
- sagittaria rigida - sessile-fruited arrowhead



Sagittaria Latifolia

Arrowhead

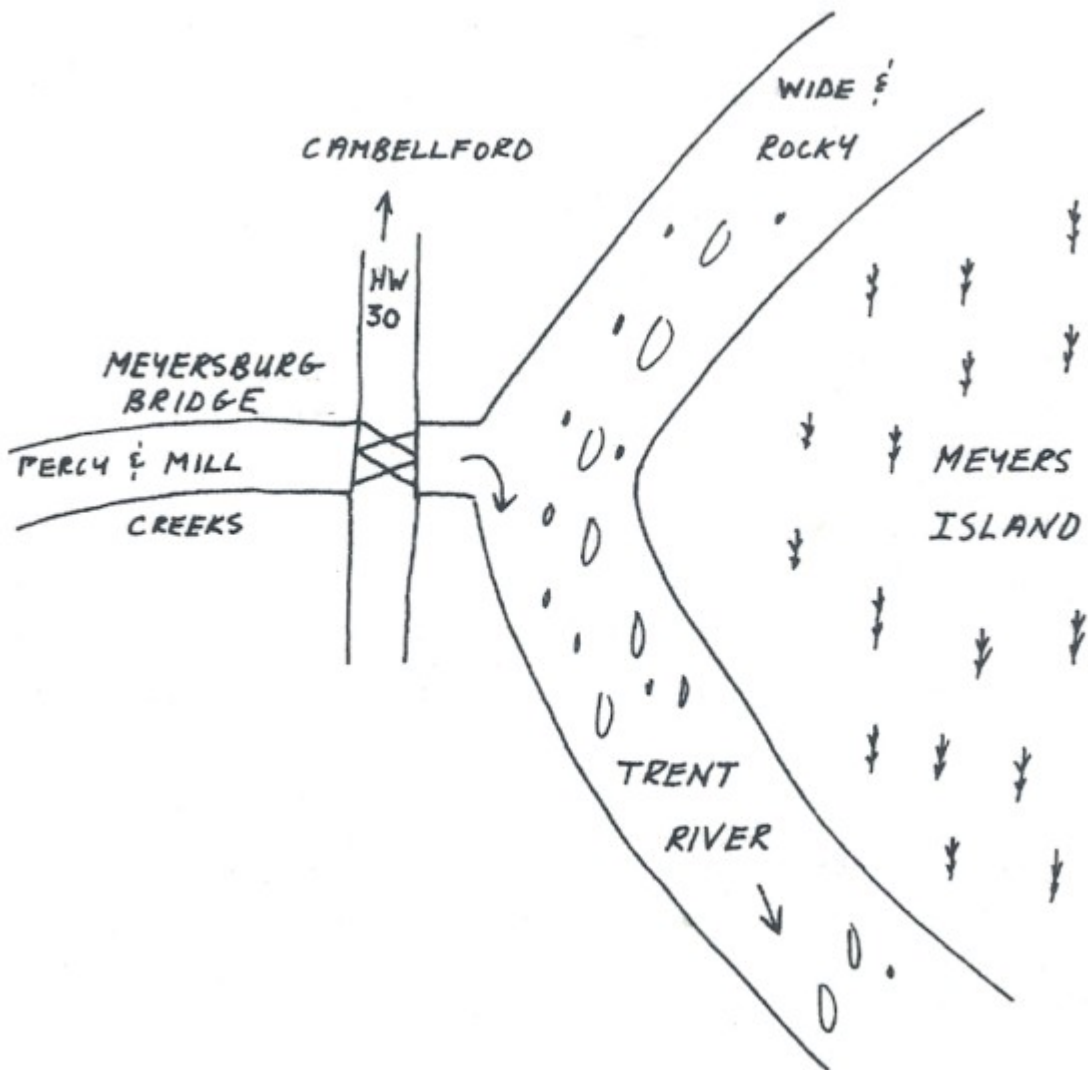
alisma triviale - water-plantain
nuphar variegatum - bullhead lily red spatterdock
pontederia cordata - pickerelweed
sparganium americanum - bur-reed
typha latifolia - common cattail
typha angustifolia - narrow-leaved cattail
pteridium aquilinum - brackenfern
matteuccia struthiopteris - ostrich fern
sagittaria - floating pondweeds
lemna - duckweeds
polygonum persicaria - swamp smartweed

cicuta maculata - water hemlock, spotted cowbane
sium suave - water parsnip
lobelia kalmii - water (brook) lobelia
scutellaria lateriflora - mad-dog skullcap
iris versicolor - larger blue-flag, wild blue iris

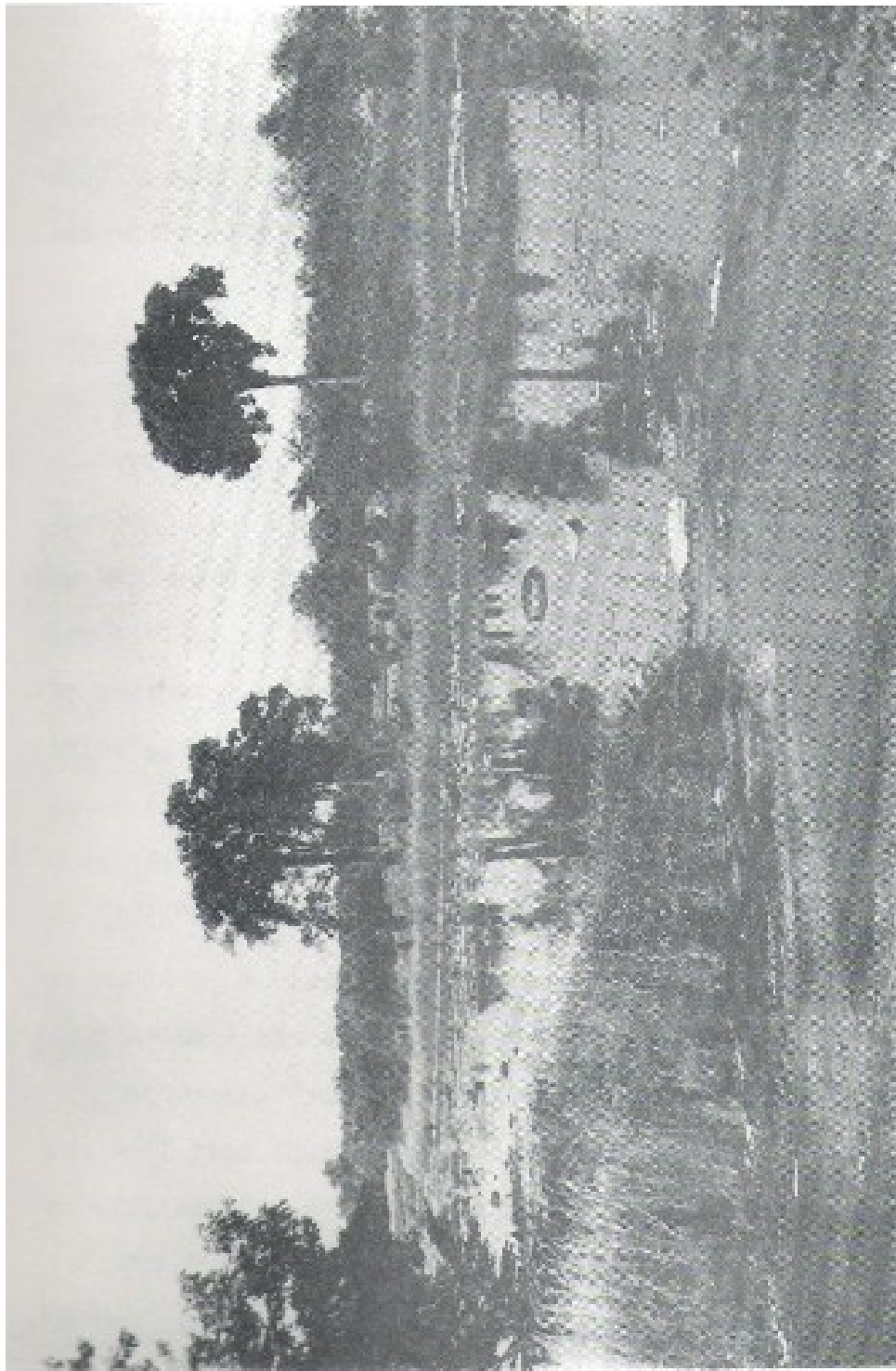
equisetum arvense - field horsetail
hordeum jubatum - squirreltail grass, wild barley
leersia oryzoides - cut grass
agropyron repens - quack or twitch grass
alopecurus aequalis - short-awn foxtail
setaria glauca - yellow foxtail
setaria viridis - green foxtail
phragmites communis - reed grass
phalaris arundinacea - canary grass
bromus tectorum - downy brome grass
cenchrus lonicaris - sand bur
digitaria ischaemum - smooth crabgrass
echinocloa crusgalli - barnyard grass
panicum capillare - old witchgrass, tumble grass
cyperus esculentus - yellow nut grass
scirpus americanus - three stem square rush, chair-maker's rush
scirpus validus - soft-stem bulrush
juncus acuminatus - sharp-fruited rush

From Maiden's Mill one comes to Meyersburg Bridge, at the point where Percy and Mill Creek empty into the Trent River.

Along the Trent, purple loosestrife outshines most of the wildflowers. The area is also covered in tall grasses with cattails and bouncing bet along the roadside. This site is excellent as an example of limestone outcropping, obvious to one wading the creek.



The River at Meyersburg



Percy Creek empties into the Trent River near
Myersburg, at the end of the Percy Portage.

Edible and Medicinal Wildplants

"This little work on the flowers and native plants of Central Canada is offered to the Canadian public with the hope that it may prove a means of awakening a love for the natural productions of the country, and a desire to acquire more knowledge of its resources. It is not a book for the learned.

The aim of the writer is simply to show the real pleasure that may be obtained from a habit of observing what is offered to the eye of the traveller - whether by the wayside path, among the trees of the forest, in the fields, or on the shores of lake and river. Even to know the common name of a flower or fern is something added to our stock of knowledge, and inclines us to wish to know something beyond the mere name.

Curiosity is awakened, and from this first step we go on to seek for higher knowledge, which may be found in works of a class far above what the writer of the present book can aspire to offer to the reader."²

Returning from the days of Catherine Parr Traill you will find that many of the wildflowers can still be utilized for medicinal and edible purposes.

"There is a popular belief among many of our native herbalists, that for every disease that man is subject to, God in his mercy has provided a certain remedy in the herbs of the fields and trees of the forest; that there is a sovereign virtue in roots and barks, and leaves and flowers, if man will but search them out and test their qualities."³

The early spring flowers in this area as described by Catherine Parr Traill containing extraordinary medicinal powers and valuable uses are:

Sanguinaria canadensis - bloodroot

The juice is used by the Indian squaws in their various manufactures. With it they dye the porcupine quills and moose hair both red and orange, and also stain baskets. They use the juice both externally in curing cutaneous eruptions of the skin, and internally in other diseases.

Arisoema triphyllum - Indian turnip, a swamp or small jack-in-the-pulpit. The juices are not acrid and of a poisonous quality, but can be rendered useful and harmless by the action of the heat; the roots roasted in the fire are no longer poisonous. The Indian herbalists used the Indian turnip in medicine as a remedy in violent colic, long experience having taught them in what manner to employ this dangerous root. The juice has also been used boiled in milk as a remedy for consumption.

Asarum canadense - wild ginger

An oil found in the root is used in making perfume.

The creeping, thick, fleshy root-stock is warm, pungent and aromatic, much used in Indian medicine craft,

Loptis trifolia - gold thread

The orange fibrous roots and rootlets are intensely bitter, and are used by the old settlers as tonic remedies against weakness in children when brought low by fever and ague. The Indian women use it for their little ones in case of sore mouth and gums in teething.

Geranium maculatum - wood geranium

The plant possesses virtues which are well known to the herbalist as powerful astringents, which quality has obtained for it the name of Slum root among the country people, who use a decoction of the root as a styptic for wounds and sweetened, as a gargle for sore throat and ulcerated mouth.

Iris versicolor - large blue flag - fleur de luce The root which is creeping, fleshy and fibrous is possessed of medicinal qualities. The hard seeds have been roasted and used as a coffee substitute.

Chimaphila umbellata - prince's pine

The leaves of this wintergreen are held in high estimation by the Indian herbalists who call it Rheumatism Weed (*Pipsissewa*). It is bitter and aromatic in quality.

Symphoca odorata - sweet scented water-lily The roots contain a large quantity of flour, which after repeated washings, may be used for food; they are also made use of in medicine, being cooling and softening; the fresh leaves are used as good dressing for blisters.

Verbascum thapsus - common mullein

The silky white hairs are used in pulmonary disorders as outward applications and assentry to allay pain. The leaves are heated by fire and laid over the body.

Lathyrus palustris - marsh vetchling or marsh pea. Indian potato, sweet bean. Tubers eaten by Indians - roast them like potatoes.

Asclepias - milkweed

Each seed is a tuft of silken hair of which farmers' wives make cushions of white flax-like silk, by filling bags of them, the shining silk showing through any transparent fabric. The juice of which is said to be narcotic.

Asclepias syriaca - common milkweed

The Ojibway and the New England Micmac Indians considered the milkweed a delicacy. The young seed pods and shoots are both edible.

Aralia racemosa - spikemaid

The long white aromatic astringent root tastes and smells like caraway. It is a valuable domestic medicine for dysenterical disorders in young children.

Gaultheria procumbens - spice wintergreen or checkerberry

The aromatic flavour of the leaves and berries are a favorite to the Indians and confectioners who take the essential oil from the leaves and fruit into sugar confections. It is also an ingredient in

tonic. The Indian squaws chew the dry spicy berries when ripe, while the Indian hunter smokes the leaves.

Eupatorium perfoliatum - boneset

This plant is a well known herb with a scent strongly resinous and bitter. It has qualities of a tonic and an anti-febrile nature, one of the old remedies for ague and fever.

Taraxacum dens - leonls - dandelion

The milky juice in the stalks and roots contains narcotic and sedative properties. The root can be used as a coffee substitute. As a herb, dandelion makes a good salad if the leaves are blanched.

Portulaca oleracea - purslane

The oily mildness of the leaves and stalks are useful as application, crushed or steeped in hot water or milk for inflammatory tumors. It can also be used as a pot herb and a dye and the greens are edible.

Solidago latifolia - goldenrod

The wives of the old Canadian settlers prized goldenrod as a dye-weed, using the blossoms for dye - dying yarn either yellow or green.

Lobelia inflata - Indian tobacco

It was much sought after by old settlers and Indian medicine men, for they considered it to possess rare virtues, infallible as a remedy in fevers and nervous disorders. The effect was one of utter prostration of the nervous system, known to be of poisonous nature - case of "kill or cure." The dried plant relieved fever through pores and the Indians would smoke the leaves, calling it kinnikinic or "good to smoke".

Gentiana saponaria - calathian violet

Effective against pestilent diseases and bitings and stingings of venomous beasts.

Anaphalis margaritacea - pearly everlasting

The abundance induced many of the backwoods settlers' wives to employ the light dry flowers as a substitute for feathers in stuffing beds and cushions.

For reading material on edible foods, The Edible Wild by Berndt Berglund and Clare Bolsby and Stalking the Wild Asparagus by Euell Gibbons are both excellent books. Further reading concerned with plant identification is listed in the bibliography.

The Percy Portage has been preserved. However, thousands of other carrying places in Canada are ignored by historians. The passing years are burying the ancient paths and soon the few traces which remain today will be lost. Study must begin immediately if we wish to have a good record of Canadian portages.

End Notes

1. Le Roy H. Appleton, Indian Art of the Americas. Plate 2, The Plains and the Lakes
2. C.P. Traill, Studies of Plant Life In Canada page vii
3. Ibid., page 8A

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